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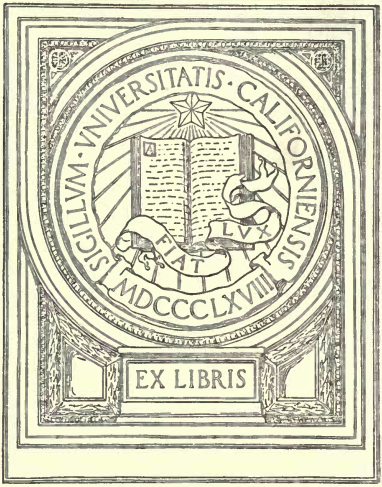

LECTURES

ON THE

CATECHISM

OF THE

CHURCH of ENGLAND:

WITH

A DISCOURSE

ON

CONFIRMATION.

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LECTURE

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTION.

IN all Matters of Importance, every one that wants Information, ſhould firſt ſeek for it, then attend to it: and the more our Happineſs depends upon judging and acting right in any Caſe, the more Care and Pains we ſhould take to qualify ourſelves for both. Now the Happineſs of all Perſons depends beyond Compariſon chiefly on being truly religious. For true Religion conſiſts in three Things; reaſonable Government of ourſelves, good Behaviour towards our Fellow-creatures, and Dutifulneſs to our Maker: the Practice of which will give us, for the moſt Part, Health of Body and Eaſe of Mind, a comfortable Proviſion of Neceſſaries, and Peace with all around us; but however, will al-

ways ſecure to us, what is infinitely more valuable ſtill, the Favour and Bleſſing of God; who, on theſe Terms, will both watch over us continually with a fatherly Kindneſs in this Life, and beſtow on us eternal Felicity in the next.

Since, therefore, whoever is religious muſt be happy, the great Concern of every one of us is to know and obſerve the Doctrines and Rules which Religion delivers. Now we all come into the World ignorant of theſe; and our Faculties are ſo weak at firſt, and gain Strength ſo ſlowly; and the Attention of our earlier Years to ſerious Things is ſo ſmall; that even were our Duty to comprehend no more than our own Reaſon could teach us, few, if any, would learn it ſufficiently without Aſſiſtance; and none ſo ſoon as they would need it. They would come out into a World full of Dangers, every Way unprepared for avoiding them; would go wrong in the very Beginning of Life, perhaps fatally: at leaſt would hurt, if they did not ruin themſelves; and make their Return into the right Path certainly difficult, and probably late.

But

But we must consider yet further, that Reason, were it improved to the utmost, cannot discover to us all that we are to believe and do: but a large and most important Part of it is to be learnt from the Revelation made to us in God's holy Word. And this, though perfectly well suited to the Purposes for which it was designed, yet being originally delivered at very distant Times, to very different Sorts of Persons, on very different Occasions; and the several Articles of Faith and Precepts of Conduct, which it prescribes, not being collected and laid down methodically in any one Part of it, but dispersed with irregular Beauty through the whole, as the Riches of Nature are through the Creation; the Informations of the more knowing must be in many Respects needful, to prepare the more ignorant for receiving the Benefits, of which they are capable from reading the Scripture. And particularly, giving them before-hand a summary and orderly View of the principal Points comprehended in it, will qualify them better than any other Thing to

diſcern its true Meaning, ſo far as is requiſite, in each Part.

Therefore, both in what Reaſon of itſelf dictates, and what God hath added to it, Inſtruction is neceſſary, eſpecially for Beginners. And indeed, as they are never left to find out by their own Abilities any other Sort of uſeful Knowledge, but always helped, if poſſible; it would be very ſtrange, if, in the moſt important Kind, the ſame Care at leaſt were not taken.

But beſides enlightening the Ignorance of Perſons, Inſtruction doth equal, if not greater, Service, by preventing or oppoſing their Prejudices and Partialities. From our tendereſt Age we have our wrong Inclinations, and are very prone to form wrong Notions in Support of them; both which we are extremely backward to acknowledge, and very apt to model our Religion in ſuch Manner as to leave Room for our Faults. Now right Explanations clearly delivered, and right Admonitions preſſed home, in early Days, may preſerve Perſons from thus deceiving themſelves, and guard them againſt future, as well as preſent Dangers.

Nay,

Nay, though ſlighted, and ſeemingly forgotten for a Time, they may ſtill keep ſecretly ſuch a Hold upon the Mind as will ſooner or later bring thoſe back, who would elſe never have ſeen, or never have owned, that they had loſt their Way.

But a ſtill further Advantage of Inſtruction is, that bringing frequently before Perſons Eyes thoſe Truths on which otherwiſe they would ſeldom reflect, though ever ſo much convinced of them, it keeps the Thoughts of their Duty continually at Hand, to reſiſt the Temptations with which they are attacked. Thus their Lives and their Minds are inſenſibly formed to be ſuch as they ought; and being thus *trained up in the Way wherein they ſhould go*, there is great Hope, that *they will not* afterwards *depart from it*[a].

Nor doth Reaſon only, but Experience too, ſhew the Need of timely Inſtitution in Piety and Virtue. For is it not viſible, that principally for Want of it, Multitudes of unhappy Creatures, in all Ranks of Life, ſet out from the firſt in Sin, and follow it on as ſecurely, as if it were the only Way

[a] Prov. xxii. 6.

they had to take; do unſpeakable Miſchief in the World, and utterly undo themſelves, Body and Soul: whilſt others, of no better natural Diſpoſitions, but only better taught, are harmleſs and uſeful, eſteemed and honoured, go through Life with Comfort, and meet Death with joyful Hope? There are doubtleſs, in ſuch Numbers, Exceptions on both Sides; but this is undeniably the ordinary, the probable, the always to be expected Courſe of Things. Therefore ſeriouſly conſider, will you deſpiſe religious Knowledge, and be like the former miſerable Wretches? or will you embrace it, and be happy with the latter, here and to Eternity?

But it is not ſufficient that you be willing to receive Inſtruction, unleſs they alſo, to whom that Care belongs, are willing to give it. Now the Care of giving it belongs to different Perſons in different Caſes. In the Caſe of Children, it uſually belongs in a peculiar Degree to their Parents; who, having been the Means of bringing them into the World, are moſt ſtrongly bound to endeavour that their Being may prove a Benefit,

nefit, not a Cauſe of Lamentation to them; and having been endued by Heaven with tender Affections towards them, will be doubly Sinners againſt them, if they are guilty of that worſt of Cruelty, not teaching them their Duty: without which alſo, and it deſerves a very ſerious Conſideration, they can no more hope for Comfort in them here, than for Acceptance with God hereafter. And therefore, both the Old Teſtament directed the Jews, to *teach their Children diligently the Words which God had commanded them*[b]; and the New enjoins Chriſtians to *bring up theirs in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*[c]. Sometimes indeed Want of Leiſure, ſometimes of Knowledge and Ability, obliges Parents to commit Part, it may be a conſiderable one, of the Inſtruction of their Children to other Perſons. But far from being ever diſcharged of the whole Burthen, they muſt always remember, that unleſs they aſſiſt and enforce what others endeavour, it will ſeldom produce any valuable Effect; and much leſs, if ſome of the Things, which their Children hear them ſay, and

[b] Deut. vi. 6, 7. [c] Epheſ. vi. 4.

ſee them do almoſt every Day, are directly contrary to thoſe, which they pretend they would have them believe and learn.

The Perſons on whom uſually this Care is devolved by Parents, are Maſters and Miſtreſſes of Schools, and afterwards Tutors in Colleges, who ought never to omit furniſhing Children, amongſt other Knowledge, plentifully with that which is the moſt neceſſary of all; but conſtantly to employ the Influence which they have on their Minds, and the Knowledge which they acquire of their Tempers, in exciting them to Good, and preſerving them from Evil, as much as they can: And Parents ought firſt abſolutely to require this of them, and then examine diligently from Time to Time whether it be done. But eſpecially Maſters and Miſtreſſes of Charity-ſchools, which are founded purpoſely to give the Children of the Poor an early and deep Tincture of Religion and Virtue, ſhould look upon it as by far their principal Buſineſs to teach them, not merely outward Obſervances and Forms of good Words, but ſuch an inward Senſe and Love of their Duty to God and Man, as may

ſecure

ſecure them, if poſſible, from that lamentable Depravity, into which the lower Part of the World is falling; and which it is highly the Intereſt of their Superiors, if they would but underſtand their Intereſt, to reſtrain and correct.

As the Care of Children belongs to their Parents and Teachers; ſo doth that of Servants to the Heads of the Families, in which they live. And therefore it is mentioned in Scripture by God himſelf, as a diſtinguiſhing Part of the Character of a good Man, *that he will command his Houſhold to keep the Way of the Lord, to do Juſtice and Judgment* [a]. For indeed it is a ſtrong and a requiſite Proof of Reverence to our Maker, as well as of Kindneſs to them, and Concern for our own Intereſt, to direct them in the Way of their Duty, or procure them the Direction of good Books and good Advice; to exhort them to the more private Exerciſes of Religion; to contrive Leiſure for them to attend the appointed ſolemn ones, which is plainly one Part of *giving them*, as the Apoſtle requires, *what is juſt and equal* [b]; and to ſee that

[a] Gen. xviii. 19. [b] Col. iv. 1.

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the Leiſure, allowed them for that Purpoſe, be honeſtly ſo employed, and not abuſed.

For, after all, the moſt valuable Inſtruction for Servants, for Children, for all Perſons, is the public one of the Church, which our Saviour himſelf hath promiſed to bleſs with his Preſence [f]. And therefore it is a Rule of inexpreſſible Moment: *Gather the People together; Men, Women, and Children, and thy Stranger that is within thy Gates: that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God; and obſerve to do all the Words of his Law: and that their Children, which have not known any Thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live* [g].

Whoever elſe may fail of doing their Duty, we the Miniſters of Chriſt muſt not fail to *be inſtant in Seaſon, and out of Seaſon* [h]; to feed the Young with *the ſincere Milk of the Word* [i], and *preach the Goſpel to the Poor* [k]. It is the peculiar Glory of Chriſtianity, to have extended religious Inſtruction, of which but few partook at all before, and ſcarce any

[f] Matth. xviii. 20. [g] Deut. xxxi. 12, 13. [h] 2 Tim. iv. 2. [i] 1 Pet. ii. 2. [k] Matth. xi. 5.

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in Purity, through all Ranks and Ages of Men and even Women. The firſt Converts to it were immediately formed into regular Societies and Aſſemblies; not only for the joint Worſhip of God, but the further *edifying of the Body of Chriſt*[l]: in which good Work, ſome of courſe were ſtated Teachers, or, to uſe the Apoſtle's own Expreſſion, *Catechizers in the Word*; others, taught or catechized[m]. For catechizing ſignifies in Scripture, at large, inſtructing Perſons in any Matter, but eſpecially in Religion. And thus it is uſed, *Acts* xviii. 25. where you read, *This Man was inſtructed in the Way of the Lord*; and *Luke* i. 4. where again you read, *That thou mayeſt know the Certainty of thoſe Things, wherein thou haſt been inſtructed.* The original Word, in both Places, is *catechized.*

But as the different Advances of Perſons in Knowledge made different Sorts of Inſtructions requiſite; ſo in the primitive Church, different Sorts of Teachers were appointed to diſpenſe it. And they who taught ſo much only of the Chriſtian Doctrine, as might

[l] Eph. iv. 12. [m] Gal. vi. 6.

qualify

qualify the Hearers for Chriſtian Communion, had the Name of Catechiſts appropriated to them: whoſe Teaching being uſually, as was moſt convenient, in a great meaſure by Way of Queſtion and Anſwer; the Name of Catechiſm hath now been long confined to ſuch Inſtruction, as is given in that Form. But the Method of employing a particular Set of Men in that Work only, is in moſt Places laid aſide. And I hope you will not be Loſers, if they, who are appointed to the higher Miniſtries of the Church, attend to this alſo.

Under the Darkneſs of Popery almoſt all religious Inſtruction was neglected. *Very few*, to uſe the Words of one of our Homilies, *even of the moſt ſimple People, were taught the Lord's Prayer, the Articles of the Faith, or the ten Commandments, otherwiſe than in Latin, which they underſtood not* [n]; ſo that one of the firſt neceſſary Steps taken towards the Reformation, in this Country, was a general Injunction, that Parents and Maſters ſhould firſt learn them in their own Tongue, then acquaint their Children and

[n] Homily againſt Rebellion, Part 6.

Servants

Servants with them[o]: which three main Branches of Chriſtian Duty, comprehending the Sum of what we are to believe, to do, and to petition for, were ſoon after formed, with proper Explanations of each, into a Catechiſm. To this was added, in Proceſs of Time, a brief Account of the two Sacraments; all together making up that very good, though ſtill improveable, *Form of ſound Words*[p], which we now uſe.

And that it may be uſed effectually, the Laws of the Land, both eccleſiaſtical and civil, require not only Miniſters to inſtruct their Pariſhioners in it, but Parents, and Maſters and Miſtreſſes of Families, to ſend their Children and Servants to be inſtructed; meaning evidently, unleſs they made ſome other more convenient Proviſion to anſwer the ſame End. For promoting religious Knowledge and Practice is not only the expreſs Deſign of all Church Government, but a Matter (would God it were well conſidered) of great Importance to the State alſo: ſince neither private Life can be happy, nor

[o] See Wake's Dedication of his Commentary on the Church Catechiſm. [p] 2 Tim. i. 13.

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the public Welfare ſecure for any long Time, without that Belief of the Doctrines and Obſervance of the Duties of Chriſtianity, for which catechizing the young and ignorant lays the firmeſt Foundation.

It muſt be owned, the Catechiſm of our Church is, as it ought to be, ſo clear in the main, as to need but little explaining, all Things conſidered. But then it is alſo, as it ought to be, ſo ſhort, as to leave much Room for ſetting forth the Particulars comprehended under its general Heads; for confirming both theſe by Reaſon and Scripture; and for imprinting the whole on the Conſciences and Affections of the Learners. This therefore I ſhall endeavour to do, in the Sequel of theſe Diſcourſes, as clearly and familiarly as I am able.

In the Nature of the Thing, nothing new or curious ought to have any Place in ſuch an Expoſition, as indeed ſuch Matters ought to have little Place in any public Teaching of God's Word: but leaſt of all, where only the plain fundamental Truths of our common Faith are to be taught, confirmed, and recommended in a plain Way. And yet, as

theſe Truths are of all others the moſt neceſſary; the plaineſt Things, that can be ſaid about them, may deſerve the Attention of all Sorts of Perſons; eſpecially as it is but too poſſible, that ſome of all Sorts may never have been taught ſufficiently even the firſt Principles of Religion, and that many may by no Means have ſufficiently retained, and conſidered ſince, what they learnt in their early Years; but preſerving ſcarce more in their Minds than the bare Words, if ſo much, may be little the better, if at all, for the Leſſons of their Childhood. To which it might be added, that every one hath need, in a greater Degree or a leſs, if not to be informed, yet to be reminded and excited.

Let me beg therefore, that all who have Cauſe to hope they may receive Benefit, would attend when they are able: and that all who have Children or Servants would bring or ſend them. This is not a Day of Buſineſs. It ought not to be a Day of idle Amuſements. It is appointed for the public Worſhip of God, and learning of his Will. This is one of the Hours of his Worſhip: it is that Part of the Day, in which you are moſt

moſt of you more at Liberty, than you are in any other. And what will you ſay for yourſelves hereafter, if when you have the moſt intire Leiſure, you chuſe rather to do any thing or nothing, than to ſerve your Maker, and improve in the Knowledge of your Duty? Never was there more Danger of being infected with Evil of every Sort from Converſation in the World. Surely then you ſhould endeavour to fortify yourſelves, and thoſe who belong to you, with proper Antidotes againſt it. And where will you find better, than in the Houſe of God? But particularly I both charge and beg you, Children, to mark diligently what I ſhall ſay to you: for all that you learn by Rote will be of no Uſe, unleſs you learn alſo to underſtand it. The Expoſition, which you are taught along with your Catechiſm, will help your Underſtanding very much, if you mind it as you ought: and what you will hear from me may be a yet further Help. For if there ſhould be ſome Things in it above your Capacities, yet I ſhall endeavour to the beſt of my Power, that moſt Things may be eaſy and plain to you. And, I entreat you, take Care that they

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be not loſt upon you. You are ſoon going out into the World, where you will hear and ſee Abundance of what is evil. For Chriſt's Sake lay in as much Good, in the mean while, as you can, to guard you againſt it.

But indeed it behoves us all, of whatever Age or Station we be, to remember, that the Belief and Practice of true Religion are what we are every one equally concerned in. For without them, the greateſt Perſon upon Earth will, in a very few Years, be completely miſerable: and with them, the meaneſt will be eternally happy. *O hear ye this, all ye People; ponder it, all ye that dwell in the World; high and low, rich and poor, one with another*[q]. *Apply your Hearts to Inſtruction, and your Ears to the Words of Knowledge*[r]. *For whoſo findeth Wiſdom, findeth Life; and ſhall obtain Favour of the Lord. But he that ſinneth againſt her, wrongeth his own Soul: all they, that hate her, love Death*[s].

[q] Pſ. xlix. 1, 2. [r] Prov. xxiii. 12. [s] Prov. viii. 35, 36.

LECTURE II.

Privileges of Baptiſm.

THE Catechiſm of our Church begins, with a prudent Condeſcenſion and Familiarity, by aſking the introductory Queſtions, *What is your Name*, and, *Who gave you this Name:* which lead very naturally the Perſon catechized to the Mention of his Baptiſm, at which Time it was given him. Not that giving a Name is any neceſſary Part of Baptiſm; but might have been done either before or afterwards, though it hath always been done then, as indeed it was likely that the firſt public Opportunity would be taken for that Purpoſe. But beſides, it was no uncommon Thing in ancient Times, that when a Perſon entered into the Service of a new Maſter, he had a new Name beſtowed on him. Whence perhaps the Jews might de-

rive the Practice of naming the Child, when it was circumciſed; it being then devoted to the Service of God. The firſt Chriſtians, in Imitation of them, would of courſe do the ſame Thing, for the ſame Reaſon, when it was baptized: and no Wonder, that we continue the Practice. For it might be a very uſeful one, if Perſons would but remember, what it tends to remind them of, that they were dedicated to Chriſt, when their Chriſtian Name was given them; and would make uſe of that Circumſtance frequently to recollect thoſe Promiſes, which were then ſolemnly made for them; and which they have ſince confirmed, or are to confirm and make perſonally for themſelves. Without performing theſe, we are Chriſtians, not in Deed, but in Name only: and ſhall greatly diſhonour that Name, while we bear it and boaſt of it.

Our baptiſmal Name is given us, not by our Parents, as we read in Scripture the Name of Jewiſh Children was, but by our Godfathers and Godmothers. And this Cuſtom alſo may have a double Advantage. It may admoniſh them, that having conferred the Title of Chriſtians upon us, they are

bound

bound to endeavour, that we may behave worthily of it. And it may admoniſh us, that our Name having been given us by Perſons, who were our Sureties, we are bound to make good their Engagement.

But the Office and Uſe of Godfathers will be conſidered under one of the following Queſtions. The Subject to be conſidered at preſent, though not fully, is Baptiſm. For this being our firſt Entrance into the Chriſtian Church, by which we become intitled to certain Privileges, and obliged to certain Duties; religious Inſtruction begins very properly by teaching young Perſons, what both of them are. And in order to recommend the Duties to us, the Privileges are mentioned firſt.

Not but that God hath an abſolute Right to our Obſervance of his Laws, without informing us beforehand, what Benefit we ſhall reap from it. Surely it would be enough to know, that he is Lord and King of the whole Earth; and that all his Dealings with the Works of his Hands are juſt and reaſonable. Our Buſineſs is to obey, and truſt Him with the Conſequences. But in great Mercy, to

encourage and attract his poor Creatures, he hath been pleased to enter into a Covenant, a gracious Agreement with Man: subjecting himself, as it were, to bestow certain Blessings on us, provided we perform certain Conditions. But though, in this Covenant, the Promises, made on his Part, flow from his own free Goodness; yet the Terms, required on ours, are Matter of necessary Obligation: and what was altogether voluntary in him, firmly binds us. [a].

Now the Privileges, thus conditionally secured to us in Baptism, we find in our Catechism very fitly reduced to these three Heads: that the Person, who receives it, is *therein made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

1. The first, and Foundation of the others, is, that he is *made a Member of Christ.* This Figure of Speech all of you may not immediately understand: but when it is understood, you will perceive in it great Strength and Beauty. It presupposes, what we must be sensible of, more or less, that we are every

[a] See *Waterland*'s Review of the Doctrine of the Eucharist, C. xi. P. 425.

one

one originally prone to Sin, and actually Sinners; liable thence to Punishment; and without Hope of preserving ourselves, by our own Strength, either from Guilt or from Misery. It further implies, what the Scripture clearly teaches, that Jesus Christ hath delivered us from both, in such Manner as shall hereafter be explained to you, on the most equitable Terms of our becoming his, by accepting him from the Hand of God for our Saviour, our Teacher, and our Lord. This Union to him, in order to receive these Benefits from him, our Catechism, in Conformity with the Language of holy Writ, compares with that of the Members of the Body to the Head. And how proper the Comparison is, will easily appear, by carrying it through the several Particulars, in which the Similitude holds.

As, in every living Creature, Perception and Motion proceed from the Head; so, to every Christian, Knowledge of God's Will, and Power to obey it, flow from Christ. As the Head governs and directs each Limb, so Christ is the Sovereign and Law-giver of each Believer. As being

joined to the Head makes the whole Body one animal Frame; so being joined to Christ makes the whole Number of Christians one spiritual Society. As Communication with the Head preserves our natural Life; so Communion with Christ supports our religious Life. He therefore is to the Church what the Head is to the Body: and each Person who belongs to the Church, is a Member of that Body, or, in the Language of the Catechism, *a Member of Christ*. For he, as St. *Paul* expresses it, is *the Head: from which all the Body, having Nourishment ministred, and knit together by Joints and Bands, increaseth with the Increase of God*[b].

And this Manner of speaking is frequently repeated in Scripture, as it well deserves; being not only, as you have seen, admirably fitted to represent the happy Relations, in which we stand to our Redeemer, but also to remind us of the Duties, which are derived from them: of the Honour and Obedience due to him, who is *Head over all Things to his Body, the Church*[c]; of our continual Dependence on him, *since he is*

[b] Col. ii. 19. [c] Ephes. i. 22, 23.

our

our Life[d]; and of the Tenderneſs and Kindneſs, which we owe to our Fellow-Chriſtians, and they to us, being all united, through him, ſo intimately to each other. For ſince, as the Apoſtle argues, *by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body:* as in the natural Body, *the Eye cannot ſay unto the Hand, I have no Need of thee,* nor any one Member to the reſt, I have no Need of you; but even the *more feeble and leſs honourable Members are neceſſary*[e]: ſo in the ſpiritual Body, they, who in any Reſpect may ſeem to excel others, ought by no Means to deſpiſe them; ſince every good Chriſtian is, in his proper Degree and Place, both a valuable and an uſeful *Member of Chriſt.* And again: As, in the natural Body, there is a Connection and Sympathy of the ſeveral Parts; by which the good State of one preſerves the others in Health and Eaſe, or its bad State gives them Pain and Diſorder; ſo ſhould there be in the ſpiritual Body, and there is in all true Members of it, a mutual Caution not to do Harm to each other, and a mutual Deſire of each others

[d] Col. iii. 4. [e] 1 Cor. xii. 13, 21, 22, 23.

Bene-

Benefit. *If one Member ſuffer, all the other Members* ſhould by a compaſſionate Temper *ſuffer with it*; and *if one Member be honoured, all* the reſt ſhould ſincerely *rejoice with it*[f]. Think then, do you feel in your Hearts this good Diſpoſition, as a Mark of being Members of Chriſt? If not, ſtudy to form yourſelves to it without Delay.

2. The ſecond Privilege of Baptiſm is, that by it *we are made the Children of God*, in a Senſe and Manner, in which by Nature we are not ſo.

Our bleſſed Saviour indeed is called in Scripture *the only begotten Son of God*. Nor can the higheſt of Creatures claim God for his Father by the ſame Right, that he doth. But in a lower Senſe, God is the Father of Angels and Men; whom he hath created in their ſeveral Degrees of Likeneſs to his own Image. *Adam*, our firſt Parent, was the Son of God by a ſtrong Reſemblance to his heavenly Father in original Uprightneſs. But as this Similitude was greatly obſcured both in him and in his Deſcendants by the Fall, though preſerved by the Covenant of the promiſed Seed from being utterly effaced;

[f] 1 Cor. xii. 26.

ſo

ſo in Time it was almoſt entirely loſt amongſt Men, by the Prevalence of Sin; and they became in general *Enemies* of God [g], and *Children of the Devil* [h].

But our gracious Maker, pitying us notwithſtanding, and treating us like Children, even when thus degenerated, hath mercifully appointed a Method for adopting us into his Family again, after we have caſt ourſelves out of it; and for reſtoring and raiſing us gradually to the ſame and greater Likeneſs to him and Favour with him, than even our firſt Parents ever enjoyed. Now this ineſtimable Bleſſing was procured for Mankind through the Means of Jeſus Chriſt; and we become intitled to it by taking him for our Head, and becoming his Members, in ſuch Manner, as you have heard briefly explained. For *to as many as receive him, to them gives he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his Name* [i]. Being therefore thus united to him, who is in the higheſt Senſe the Son of God; and claiming not in our own Name, but under him; we are admitted again into ſuch a Degree of

[g] Rom. v. 10. Col. i. 21. [h] 1 John iii. 10. [i] John i. 12.

Sonſhip

Sonſhip as we are capable of; and made *the Children of God, by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt* [k].

Indeed not only Chriſtians, but the Jews, are called in Scripture *the Children of God* [l]; and ſuch they really were; being firſt, as Chriſtians were afterwards, the *Children of his Covenant* [m]. But ſtill, as theirs was a State of leſs Knowledge, more burthenſome Precepts, and ſtricter Government; the Apoſtle ſpeaks of them, compared with us, only as Servants in his Family. *Now I ſay, that the Heir, as long as he is a Child, differeth nothing from a Servant, though he be Lord of all. Even ſo we,* ſpeaking of the Jewiſh Nation, *when we were Children,* unqualified for any great Degrees of Liberty, *were in Bondage under the Elements of the World. But when the Fulneſs of Time was come, God ſent forth his Son to redeem them, that were under the Law. Wherefore we are no more Servants but Sons* [n]. *Behold* then, as St. *John* expreſſes it, *what Manner of Love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called,* in this diſtinguiſhed Senſe, *the Sons*

[k] Gal. iii. 26. [l] Deut. xiv. 1. [m] Acts iii. 25. [n] Gal. iv. 1, 3, 4, 7.

of

of God[o]: especially considering the Consequence drawn by St. *Paul*, *If Children, then Heirs; Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ*[p]: which is the

3. Third and last Privilege of Baptism, and completes the Value of it, that by entering into the Christian Covenant we are *made Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*; that is, intitled to perfect and endless Happiness in Body and Soul. Had we continued in the primitive Uprightness of our first Parents, and never sinned at all, we could have had no Claim, but from God's free Promise, to any thing more, than that our Being should not be worse to us than not Being. But as we are originally depraved, and have actually sinned, far from having any Claim to Happiness, we are liable to just Punishment for ever. And least of all could we have any Claim to such Happiness, as eternal Life and Glory. But *blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; who of his abundant Mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope; to an Inheritance*

[o] 1 John iii. 1. [p] Rom. viii. 17.

in-

incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us [q].

These then are the Privileges of the Christian Covenant. As for those, who have no Knowledge of that Covenant; the Apostle hath told us indeed, that *as many as have sinned without Law, shall perish without Law* [r]: but he hath told us also, that *when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by Nature the Things contained in the Law, they are a Law unto themselves* [s]. And whether none of them shall attain to any Degree of a better Life, is no Concern of ours; who may well be contented with the Assurance, that our own Lot will be a happy one beyond all Comparison, if we please. He, who hath shewn the Abundance of his Love to us, will undoubtedly shew, not only his Justice, but his Mercy, to all the Works of his Hands, as far, and in such Manner, as is fit. There is indeed *none other Name under Heaven, given among Men, whereby we must be saved*, but that of *Jesus Christ* [t]. But whether they, who have not had in this

[q] 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. [r] Rom. ii. 12. [s] Ibid. viii. 14.
[t] Acts iv. 10, 12.

Life

Life the Means of calling upon it, ſhall receive any Benefit from him; or if any, what and how; as neither Scripture hath told us, nor Reaſon can tell us, it is preſumptuous to determine, and uſeleſs to inquire.

The Points, to which we muſt attend, are thoſe, which relate to ourſelves: that we *give* due *Thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*[u]; and be duly careful to *walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his Kingdom and Glory*[w]. For we have a Right to the Privileges of the Covenant, only on the Suppoſition and Preſumption of our performing the Obligations of it. Children indeed of Believers, who are taken out of the World before they become capable of Faith and Obedience, we doubt not, are happy. For the general Declarations of holy Writ plainly comprehend their Caſe: and our Saviour hath particularly declared, that *of ſuch is the Kingdom of God*[x]. But all, who live to maturer Years; as, on the one Hand, they may intitle themſelves,

[u] Col. i. 12. [w] 1 Theſſ. ii. 12. [x] Mark x. 14. Luke xviii. 16.

through God's bountiful Promiſe, though not their own Merit, to higher Degrees of future Felicity, in Proportion as their Service hath been conſiderable; ſo on the other, they are intitled to no Degree at all, any longer than they practiſe that *Holineſs*, in which they have engaged to live, and *without* which *no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*[y]. We ſhall be acknowledged as Children, only whilſt we obey our heavenly Father: and *the Baptiſm, which ſaveth us, is not the* outward *putting away of the Filth of the Fleſh, but the* inward *Anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God*[z]. Which therefore that we may all of us be able always to make, may he of his infinite Mercy grant, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

[y] Heb. xii. 14. [z] 1 Pet. iii. 21.

LEC-

LECTURE III.

Renunciation in Baptiſm.

AFTER the Privileges, to which Baptiſm gives us a Claim, our Catechiſm proceeds to ſet forth the Duties, to which it binds us: thoſe Things, *which our Godfathers and Godmothers promiſed and vowed in our Names.* For without the Performance of theſe Conditions, neither hath God engaged, nor is it conſiſtent with the Holineſs of his Nature and the Honour of his Government, to beſtow ſuch Benefits upon us: nor indeed ſhall we be capable of receiving them. For a virtuous and religious Temper and Behaviour here, is abſolutely requiſite, not only to intitle, but to qualify and prepare us for a virtuous and religious Bleſſedneſs hereafter, ſuch as that of Heaven is.

Now these Conditions, or Obligations on our Part, are three: that we renounce what God forbids; that we believe what he teaches, and do what he commands: or, in other Words, Repentance, Faith and Obedience. These Things are plainly necessary; and they are plainly all that is necessary: for as, through the Grace of God, we have them in our Power; so we have nothing more. And therefore they have been constantly, and without any material Variation, expressed in Baptism from the earliest Ages of the Church to the present.

The first Thing, and the only one which can be explained at this Time, is, that we renounce what God forbids, every Sin of every Kind. And this is put first, because it opens the Way for the other two. When once we come to have a due Sense that we are Sinners, as all Men are, and perceive the Baseness, the Guilt, the Mischief of Sin, we shall fly from it, with sincere Penitence, to the Remedy of Faith which God hath appointed. And when we in earnest resolve to forsake whatever is wrong, we shall gladly embrace all such Truths as will

will direct us right, and do what they require. But whilst we retain a Love to any Wickedness; it will make us, with respect to the Doctrines of Religion, backward to receive them [a], or unwilling to think of them, or desirous to interpret them unfairly: and with respect to the Duties of Religion, it will make our Conduct unequal and inconsistent; perplexing us with silly Attempts to reconcile Vice and Virtue, and to atone perhaps by Zeal in little Duties for Indulgence of great Faults; till at last we shall either fall into an open Course of Transgression, or, which is equally fatal, contrive to make ourselves easy in a secret one. The only effectual Method therefore is to form a general Resolution at once, though we shall execute it but imperfectly and by Degrees, of following in every Thing the Scripture Rule, *Cease to do evil, learn to do well* [b].

Now the Evil, from which we are required to cease, is also ranged in our Cate-

[a] Hence our Saviour, speaking of *John Baptist*, tells the Jews, Ye — repented not, — that ye might believe him. Matth. xxi. 32. [b] Isa. i. 16, 17.

chiſm under three Heads. For whatever we do amiſs, proceeds either from the ſecret Suggeſtions of an inviſible Enemy, from the Temptations thrown in our Way by the viſible Objects around us, or from the bad Diſpoſitions of our own Nature: that is, from the Devil, the World, or the Fleſh. And though every one of theſe, in their Turns, may incline us to every Kind of Sin; and it is not always either eaſy or material to know, from which the Inclination proceeded originally: yet ſome Sins may more uſually flow from one Source, and ſome from another; and it will give us a more comprehenſive, and, ſo far at leaſt, a more uſeful View of them, if we conſider them each diſtinctly.

1. Firſt then, we renounce in Baptiſm *the Devil and all his Works.* This, in the primitive Ages, was the only Renunciation made: the Works of the Devil being underſtood to ſignify, as they do in Scripture, every Sort of Wickedneſs; which being often ſuggeſted by him, always acceptable to him, and an Imitation of him, was juſtly conſidered as ſo much Service done him, and

Obedi-

Obedience paid him. But the Method now taken, of renouncing the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh ſeparately, is more convenient, as it gives us a more particular Account of our ſeveral Enemies.

What we are taught concerning the Devil, and Demons or wicked Spirits, in the Word of God, is, that a Number of Angels, having ſinned againſt their Maker, (from what Motives, or in what Inſtances, we are not, as we need not be, clearly told, but) ſo as to be utterly unfit for Pardon, were caſt out from Heaven, and are kept under ſuch Confinement as God ſees proper, till the Day comes, when the final Sentence, which they have deſerved, ſhall be executed upon them: but that, in the mean Time, being full of all Evil, and void of all Hope, they maliciouſly endeavour to make thoſe, whom they can, wicked and miſerable, like themſelves. And being all united under one Head, and actuated by one and the ſame Spirit of Ill-will againſt us, we are concerned to look upon them as one Enemy; and therefore the Catechiſm ſpeaks of them as ſuch.

What Means they uſe to tempt us, we are not diſtinctly informed: and it is great Folly, either, on the one Hand, to doubt of the Reality of the Fact, becauſe we know not the Manner; or, on the other, to entertain groundleſs Imaginations, or believe idle Stories; and aſcribe more to evil Spirits, than we have any ſufficient Cauſe. For there is no Religion in favouring ſuch Fancies, or giving Credit to ſuch Tales; and there hath frequently ariſen a great deal of hurtful Superſtition from them. This we are ſure of, and it is enough, that neither Satan nor all his Angels have Power, either to force any one of us into Sin, or to hinder us from repenting, or, without God's eſpecial Leave, to do any one of us the leaſt Hurt in any other Way. And we have no Cauſe to think, that Leave to do Hurt is ever granted them, but on ſuch extraordinary Occaſions as are mentioned in Scripture. They are indeed often permitted to intice us to ſin, as we too often intice one another. But theſe Inticements of evil Spirits may be withſtood by us juſt as effectually, and nearly by juſt the ſame Methods, as

thoſe of evil Men. *Reſiſt the Devil, and he will flee from you: draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.* [c]. Unqueſtionably our Danger is the greater, as we have not only Fleſh and Blood, our own bad Inclinations, and the Allurements of other bad Perſons to encounter, but the Efforts of an inviſible Enemy likewiſe. And therefore it was great Mercy in God, to grant us the Knowledge of this intereſting, and otherwiſe undiſcoverable, Circumſtance of our Condition, that we may increaſe our Watchfulneſs in Proportion. And if we do, *greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the World* [d]: and he *will not ſuffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear* [e].

But, though the Devil hath no Power of his own over us, we may give him as much as we will; and become Slaves and Vaſſals to him as long as we pleaſe. In this Senſe his Empire is very large: and on account of it the Scripture calls him *the Prince of the Power of Darkneſs* [f], and even *the God of this World* [g]. For he was, and is ſtill,

[c] Jam. iv. 7, 8. [d] 1 John iv. 4. [e] 1 Cor. x. 13.
[f] Epheſ. ii. 2. Col. i. 13. [g] 2 Cor. iv. 4.

in great Propriety of Speech, the God of many Heathen Nations; who, inſtead of the righteous and good Maker of Heaven and Earth, worſhip Deities of ſuch vile and miſchievous Characters, as we juſtly aſcribe to the evil one. And even where Faith in the true Deity is profeſſed; yet pretended Arts of Magic, Witchcraft, Conjuring, Fortune-telling, and ſuch like wicked Follies, approach more or leſs to the ſame Crime. For if any of the Wretches, guilty of theſe Things, either have, or imagine they have, any Communication with the Devil; they plainly rebel againſt God, and endeavour at leaſt to confederate with his Enemy. Or if they only pretend a Communication with him; as indeed uſually, if not always, it is mere Pretence; yet this is very inconſiſtent with renouncing him. And even when they do not ſo much as pretend it, and would make us believe, that they have ſuch extraordinary Skill and Power derived from more innocent Sources; though they profeſs no Reſpect to his Perſon, they imitate him in one of his worſt Qualities, as he is the Father of Lies. And the Lies of this Kind are very perni-

cious ones. They corrupt the Notions of Religion; give Perſons unworthy Opinions of God; and lead them to imagine, that other Beings, as the Stars, or even mere Names, as Chance and Fate, ſhare with him in the Government of the World. But indeed Lies of all Sorts are peculiarly the Works of him, who was a *Liar*, as well as *a Murderer from the Beginning*[h]. And other Sins mentioned in Scripture, as more eſpecially diabolical, are, Pride, Envy, Malice, falſe Accuſations. Whoſoever therefore allows himſelf in any of theſe Things, *is of his Father the Devil, and the Luſts of his Father he doth*[i]. But whoever is by Baptiſm *delivered from the Power of Darkneſs, and tranſlated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son*[k], renounces them all.

Aſk yourſelves then: Do you renounce them all in Fact? For mere Words are nothing. Do you carefully avoid them, and labour to preſerve yourſelves free from them; or do you live in any of them, and love them? That is, are you Children of God, or of Satan; and whoſe are you willing to remain?

[h] John viii. 44. [i] Ibid. [k] Col. i. 13.

Make

Make us thine, good Lord, and keep us ſo for ever!

2. We renounce, in Baptiſm, *all the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World.* The World, which God created, was good: and ſo far as it continues good, we renounce it not. Therefore the innocent Gratifications, which he hath provided for us in it, we ought not to condemn, but to partake of them with Moderation and Thankfulneſs: the Difference of Ranks and Stations, which is requiſite for the due Order of Society, we ought to maintain with prudent Humility; and every one ſhould take his proper Part, as Providence directs him, in the various Employments which furniſh to us the Neceſſaries or Conveniences of Life. Labouring to procure ſuch a Competency for ourſelves and ours, as will ſupport us comfortably in our preſent Condition, is what we are bound to. And if, by lawful Methods and reaſonable Care, we can riſe higher, we may allowably do it, and juſtly conſider it as the promiſed Bleſſing of God upon our Induſtry. In theſe reſpects then we do not renounce the World: for in theſe it is not wicked. And we ſhould

not

not affect to detach ourſelves too much from the State of Things, in which Heaven hath placed us: but, ordinarily ſpeaking, take our Share, (whatever it happens to be,) and that contentedly, of ſuch Employments as contribute to the common Good. If we do meet with difficult Trials in our Way; as they are of God's chuſing for us, we are not to fly from them improperly, but truſt in him for Ability to go through them well. And they, who reſolve to retire out of the Reach of all ſuch Temptations, ſeldom fail to run into more dangerous ones of their own creating.

We ought not therefore to ſhun what our Maker hath appointed us to engage in: but then we ought to engage in it only in ſuch Manner as he hath appointed; and to recollect continually, *that we are of God, and the whole World lieth in Wickedneſs*[1]. Not only the Heathen World had its idolatrous Pomps, or public Spectacles, and its immoral Vanities, which were peculiarly meant in this Renunciation at firſt: but that, which calls itſelf Chriſtian, is full of Things, from

[1] 1 John v. 19.

which

which a true Chriſtian muſt abſtain. All Methods of being powerful or popular, inconſiſtent with our Integrity; all Arts of being agreeable at the Expence or Hazard of our Innocence; all Ways of encroaching on the Properties of others, and all immoderate Deſires of adding to our own; all Diverſions, Entertainments and Acquaintances, that have a Tendency to hurt our Morals or our Piety: making common Practice the Rule of our Conduct, without conſidering whether it be right or wrong; filling our Time in ſuch Manner, either with Buſineſs or Amuſements, (be they ever ſo innocent in themſelves) as not to leave Room for the main Buſineſs of Life, the Improvement of our Hearts in Virtue, the ſerious Exerciſe of Religion, and a principal Attention to the great Concerns of Eternity: theſe are the Things, in which conſiſts that *Friendſhip with the World*, which *is Enmity with God*[m]; and *if any Man love it* thus, *the Love of the Father is not in him*[n]. Which then do you renounce, and which do you chuſe? The World, or the Maker of it? Surely you will adopt the Pſalmiſt's Words:

[m] James iv. 4. [n] 1 John ii. 15.

I cried

I cried unto thee, O Lord, and ſaid, Thou art my Hope, and my Portion, in the Land of the living °.

3. We renounce, at our Baptiſm, *all the ſinful Luſts of the Fleſh:* that is, every unreaſonable and forbidden Gratification of any Appetite or Averſion that belongs to the human Frame. Whatever Inclination is truly primitive in our Nature may be innocently gratified, provided it be in a lawful Manner, and a due Subordination to the higher Principles within us: but when theſe Bounds are tranſgreſſed, there begins Sin. All ſuch Indulgence therefore in Eating or Drinking, as obſcures the Reaſon of Perſons, inflames their Paſſions, hurts their Health, impairs their Fortunes, or waſtes their Time; all Sloth, Indolence, and luxurious Delicacy; all Wantonneſs, Impurity, and Indecency, with whatever tempts to it; theſe are renounced under this Head: and not theſe only; but every other Sin, that hath its firſt Riſe within our Hearts. For in the Language of Religion, as the *Spirit* ſignifies the inward Principle of all Good, ſo doth

° Pſal. cxlii. 6.

the

the *Fleſh* that of all Evil. Therefore Vanity and Self-conceit, immoderate Anger, ill Temper and Hard-heartedneſs, repining at the Good of others, or even at our own Diſadvantages; in ſhort, whatever Diſpoſition of our Souls is diſhonourable to God, prejudicial to our Neighbour, or unreaſonable in itſelf, falls under the ſame Denomination with the aforementioned Vices. For *the Works of the Fleſh*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *are manifeſt: Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Hatred, Variance, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Envyings, and ſuch like: of the which I tell you before, as I alſo told you in Time paſt, that they who do ſuch Things, ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*[p]. *Let us therefore fear, leſt a Promiſe being left us of entering into his Reſt, any of you ſhould come ſhort of it*[q]. And let us diligently and frequently examine our Hearts, whether we uſe every proper Method to *cleanſe ourſelves from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God*[r].

But before I conclude, I muſt deſire you to obſerve, concerning each of the Things,

[p] Gal. v. 19—21. [q] Heb. iv. 1. [r] 2 Cor. vii. 1.

which

which we renounce in Baptiſm, that we do not undertake what is beyond our Power; that the Temptations of the Devil ſhall never beſet and moleſt us; that the vain Shew of the World ſhall never appear inviting to us; that our own corrupt Nature ſhall never prompt or incline us to Evil: but we undertake, what, through the Grace of God, though not without it, is in our Power; that we will not, either deſignedly or careleſly, give theſe our ſpiritual Enemies needleſs Advantages againſt us; and that, with whatever Advantage they may at any Time attack us, we will never yield to them, but always reſiſt them with our utmoſt Prudence and Strength. This is the Renunciation here meant: and the Office of Baptiſm expreſſeth it more fully; where we engage *ſo to renounce the Devil, the World and the Fleſh, that we will not follow nor be led by them.* Now God grant us all, faithfully to make this Engagement good, *that after we have done his Will, we may receive his Promiſe*[1]!

[1] Heb. x. 36.

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LECTURE IV.

Obligation to believe and to do, &c.

OUR Catechiſm, in the Anſwer to its third Queſtion, teaches, that three Things are promiſed in our Name, when we are baptized: that we ſhall renounce what God forbids, believe what he makes known, and do what he commands. The firſt of theſe hath been explained to you. The ſecond and third ſhall be explained, God willing, hereafter. But before the Catechiſm proceeds to them, it puts a fourth Queſtion, and a very natural one, conſidering that Children do not, as they cannot, promiſe theſe Things for themſelves, but their Godfathers and Godmothers in their Names. It aſks them therefore, *whether they think they are bound to believe and to do, as they have promiſed for them.* And to this the Perſon inſtructed anſwers,

Yes verily: the Fitneſs of which Anſwer will appear by enquiring,

1. In what Senſe, and for what Reaſon, they promiſed theſe Things in our Names.

2. On what Account we are bound to make their Promiſes good.

1. In what Senſe, and for what Reaſon, they promiſed theſe Things in our Names. A little Attention will ſhew you this Matter clearly.

The Perſons, who began the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity in the World, muſt have been ſuch, as were of Age to make it their own free Choice. And when they entered into the Covenant of Baptiſm, they undoubtedly both had the Privileges of it declared to them, and engaged to perform the Obligations of it, in ſome Manner, equivalent to that, which we now uſe. When theſe were admitted by Baptiſm into the Chriſtian Church, their Children had a Right to be ſo too, as will be proved in the Sequel of theſe Lectures: at preſent let it be ſuppoſed. But if Baptiſm had been adminiſtred to Children, without any thing ſaid to expreſs its Meaning, it would have had too much the Appearance of

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an inſignificant Ceremony, or a ſuperſtitious Charm. And if only the Privileges, to which it intitled, had been rehearſed; they might ſeem annexed to it abſolutely, without any Conditions to be obſerved on the Childrens Part. It was therefore needful to expreſs the Conditions alſo. Now it would naturally appear the ſtrongeſt and livelieſt Way of expreſſing them, to repreſent the Infant, as promiſing by others then, what he was to promiſe by and for himſelf, as ſoon as he could. So the Form, uſed already for Perſons grown up, was applied, with a few Changes, to Children alſo. And though, by ſuch Application, ſome Words and Phraſes muſt appear a little ſtrange, if they were ſtrictly interpreted: yet the Intention of them was and is underſtood to be a very proper one; declaring in the fulleſt Manner what the Child is to do hereafter, by a Figure and Repreſentation made of it at preſent.

But then, as Baptiſm is adminiſtred only on the Preſumption, that this Repreſentation is to become in due Time a Reality: ſo the Perſons, who thus promiſe in the Child's

Name, are and always have been looked on as promiſing, by the ſame Words, in their own Name, not indeed abſolutely, that the Child ſhall fulfil their Engagements, which nobody can promiſe; but that, ſo far as need requires, they will endeavour that he ſhall: on which it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, that he will. Anciently the Parents were the Perſons, who, at Baptiſm, both repreſented their Children, and promiſed for their Inſtruction and Admonition. But it was conſidered afterwards, that they were obliged to it without promiſing it: and therefore other Perſons were procured to undertake it alſo: not to excuſe the Parents from that Care, from which nothing can excuſe them; but only, in a Caſe of ſuch Conſequence, to provide an additional Security for it. If then the Parents give due Inſtruction, and the Child follows it, the Godfathers have nothing to do, but to be heartily glad. But if on either Side there be a Failure, it is then *their Part and Duty* to interpoſe, as far as they have Ability and Opportunity with any Proſpect of Succeſs. Nor is this to be done only till young Perſons take

take their baptiſmal Vow upon themſelves at Confirmation, but ever after. For to that End, even they, who are baptized in their riper Years, muſt have Godfathers and Godmothers preſent: not to repreſent them, or to promiſe for them, neither being wanted; but to remind them, if there be Occaſion, *what a ſolemn Profeſſion they have made before theſe their choſen Witneſſes* [a].

This then is the Nature, and theſe are the Reaſons of that Promiſe, which the Sureties of Children baptized make in their Name: which Promiſe therefore may without Queſtion be ſafely and uſually made, provided it be afterwards religiouſly kept. But they, who probably will be wanted to perform their Promiſe, and yet will neglect it, ſhould not be invited to enter into it: and if they are, ſhould refuſe. Let every one concerned think ſeriouſly, whether he hath obſerved theſe Rules, or not: for evidently it is a ſerious Matter, how little ſoever it be commonly conſidered as ſuch.

2. The ſecond Queſtion is, On what Account we are bound by what was promiſed at

[a] Office of Baptiſm.

our Baptiſm, ſince we neither conſented to that Engagement, nor knew of it. Now certainly we are not bound to do whatever any other Perſon ſhall take upon him to promiſe in our Name. But if the Thing promiſed be Part of an Agreement advantageous to us, we are plainly bound in point of Intereſt; and indeed of Conſcience too: for we ought to conſult our own Happineſs. Even by the Laws of Men, Perſons, unable to expreſs their Conſent, are yet preſumed to conſent to what is for their own Good [b]: and Obligations are underſtood to lie upon them from ſuch preſumed Conſent ever after: eſpecially if there be a Repreſentative acting for them, who is empowered ſo to do [c]. And Parents are empowered by Nature to act for their Children; and by Scripture to do it in this very Caſe; and therefore may employ others to do it under them. But further ſtill: the Things, promiſed in Baptiſm, would have been abſolutely incumbent on

[b] The firſt Foundation of Obligations *quaſi ex contractu* is, that *Quiſque præſumitur conſentire in id, quod Utilitatem affert.* See Eden, El. Jur. Civ. l. 3. tit. 28. p. 206.

[c] Of Stipulations in another's Name, See Inſt. 3. 20. 20.

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us, whether they had been promiſed or not. For it is incumbent on all Perſons to believe and do what God commands. Only the Tie is made ſtronger by the Care then taken, that we ſhall be taught our Duty. And when we have acknowledged ourſelves to have learnt it, and have ſolemnly engaged ourſelves to perform it, as we do when we are confirmed, then the Obligation is complete.

But perhaps it will be aſked, How ſhall all Perſons, eſpecially the poor and unlearned, know, that what they are taught to believe is really true; and what they are taught to do, really their Duty. I anſwer: The greateſt Part of it, when once it is duly propoſed to them, they may perceive to be ſo, by the Light of their own Reaſon and Conſcience: as I doubt not to ſhew you. Such Points indeed as depend not on Reaſon, but on the Revelation made in Scripture, cannot all of them be proved in ſo ſhort a Way, nor perhaps to an equal Degree of Plainneſs: but to a ſufficient Degree they may; as I hope to ſhew you alſo. And in ſuch Matters, they, who have but ſmall

Abilities or Opportunities for Knowledge, muſt, where they cannot do better for themſelves, rely on thoſe who have more: not blindly and abſolutely, but ſo far as is prudent and fit: juſt as, in common Buſineſs, and the very weightieſt of our worldly Concerns, we all truſt, on many Occaſions, to one anothers Judgment and Integrity; nor could the Affairs of human Life go on, if we did not. And though in this Method of proceeding, ſome will have far leſs Light, than others; yet all will have enough to direct their Steps: and they who have the leaſt, are as much obliged to follow that carefully, as if they had the moſt; and will be as ſurely led by it to a happy End. Hearken therefore to Inſtruction diligently, and conſider of it ſeriouſly, and judge of it uprightly: and fear not at all after this, but that when you are aſked, whether *you think yourſelves bound to believe and to do what was promiſed in your Name*, you will be well able, and on good Grounds, to anſwer in the firſt Place, *Yes verily*.

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But your Anſwer muſt not ſtop here. When you are thus perſuaded, your next Concern is, immediately to act according to that Perſuaſion. Now as this depends on two Things; our own Reſolution, and Aſſiſtance from above: ſo both are expreſſed in the following Words of the Anſwer, *and by God's Help, ſo I will.* Further: Becauſe our own Reſolution is beſt ſupported by our Senſe of the Advantage of keeping it; therefore the Perſon inſtructed goes on, in the ſame Anſwer, to acknowledge, that the State, in which he is placed by Baptiſm, is *a State of Salvation:* and becauſe Aſſiſtance from above is beſt obtained by Thankfulneſs for God's Mercy hitherto, and Prayer for it hereafter, he concludes, by *thanking our heavenly Father, for calling him to this State; and praying for his Grace, that he may continue in the ſame to his Life's End.*

Now the Neceſſity and Nature of God's Grace, and of Prayer and other Means to obtain it, will be explained in their proper Places. The two Points therefore, of which it remains to ſpeak at preſent, are, the Need of good Reſolution, and of Thankfulneſs for

that happy State, in which Baptiſm hath placed us.

In every Thing that we attempt, much depends on a deliberate and fixed Purpoſe of Mind. But particularly in Religion, when once we are thoroughly convinced, that whatever it requires muſt be done; and have determined accordingly, that, though we know there will be Labour and Difficulty in going on, and many Solicitations and Enticements to leave off, yet we will ſet about the Work, and perſevere in it; Obſtacles and Diſcouragements, that till then appeared very threatening, will, a great Part of them, vaniſh into nothing; and thoſe, which remain, will ſerve only to exerciſe our Courage, and make our Triumph glorious; provided we keep our Reſolution alive and in Vigour, by frequently repeating it in a proper Manner: that is, in a ſtrong Senſe of God's Preſence, and an humble Dependence on his Bleſſing. For if we truſt in ourſelves, we ſhall fail. And if we pretend to truſt in God, without exerting ourſelves, we ſhall fail equally. In either Caſe, the good Impreſſions made

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on our Minds will be continually growing fainter of courſe: and Multitudes of Things will conſpire to wear them quite out. Pleaſures will ſoften us into Diſſoluteneſs; or Amuſements, into Neglect of every ſerious Attention. Love of Riches or Power or Applauſe will engage us in wrong Methods of attaining them: or the Cares of Life will baniſh the Duties of it from our Thoughts. Vehement Paſſions will overſet our Virtue: or inſinuating Temptations undermine it as effectually. Some of theſe Things muſt happen, unleſs we preſerve a ſteady and watchful, a modeſt and religious Reſolution againſt them, ever freſh on our Minds.

And nothing will contribute more to our doing this, than reflecting often, with due Thankfulneſs, that the State, *to which God hath called us*, is *a State of Salvation:* a State of Deliverance from the preſent Slavery of Sin, and the future Puniſhment of it; a State of the trueſt Happineſs, that this Life can afford, introducing us to perfect and everlaſting Happineſs in the next. Such is the Condition, in which, through the

Mercy

Mercy of God, we Chriſtians are placed; and in which, by a chriſtian Behaviour, we may ſecure ourſelves; and not only preſerve, but continually enlarge, our Share of its Bleſſings. But if we now neglect to do for ourſelves what we ought; all, that hath been done for us by others, will be of no Avail. Neither our Baptiſm, nor our Inſtruction; nor our learning ever ſo exactly, or underſtanding ever ſo diſtinctly, or remembering ever ſo particularly, what we were inſtructed in, can poſſibly have any Effect, but to increaſe our Condemnation, unleſs we faithfully *continue in* the Practice of every Part of it *to our Life's End.* This therefore let us all determine to make our conſtant and moſt earneſt Care, with humble Gratitude to God, *our heavenly Father,* for his undeſerved Mercy to us; and with ſure Confidence, that if we be not wanting to ourſelves, *he that hath begun a good Work in us, will perform it, until the Day of Jeſus Chriſt* [d].

[d] Phil. i. 6.

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LECTURE V.

Grounds and Rule of Faith.

HAVING already explained to you the ſeveral Things, which Chriſtians by the Covenant of their Baptiſm renounce; I come now to ſpeak of what we are to believe: after which will follow properly what we are to do. For all reaſonable Practice muſt be built on ſome Belief, or Perſuaſion, which is the Ground of it: virtuous Practice, on a Perſuaſion, that what we do is fit and right; religious Practice, on a Perſuaſion, that it is the Will of God. Now God hath been pleaſed to make his Will known by two Ways: partly by the mere inward Light of our own Underſtandings; partly by the outward Means of additional Declarations from himſelf. The former of theſe we call natural Religion: the latter, revealed Religion.

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The natural Reaſon of our own Minds, if we would ſeriouſly attend to it, and faithfully aſſiſt each other in uſing it, is capable of diſcovering, as ſhall be proved to you, not only the Being and Attributes, and Authority of God; but, in general, what Sort of Behaviour he muſt expect from ſuch Creatures, placed in ſuch a World, as we are, in order to avoid his Diſpleaſure, and procure ſome Degree of his Favour. And as we cannot doubt of what our own clear Apprehenſion, and the common Senſe of Mankind, plainly tell us: here is one Foundation of religious Belief and Practice, evident to all Men. And if our Belief and Practice be not ſuitable to it, our Conſciences, whenever we conſult them, nay often whether we conſult them or not, will condemn us, to our Faces, of Sin; and proclaim to us beforehand the Juſtice of that future Condemnation, which God will paſs upon it. Every one of you, that hear me, have at Times felt this; make, every one of you, a proper Uſe of it.

If then the Light of Nature were our only Guide, it would teach us more than, I fear, many of us obſerve. But happy are we,

we, that this is not our only Guide. For it would leave us uninformed in many Particulars of unſpeakable Moment, even were our Faculties unimpaired, and employed to the beſt Advantage. But alas, the very firſt of Mankind fell into Sin, and derived a corrupted Nature down to their Poſterity: who yet further inflamed their own Paſſions and Appetites, perverted their own Judgments, turned aſide their Attention from the Truth; and *the Light that was in them became*, in a great Meaſure, *Darkneſs*[a], even in reſpect of what they were to do. But what they were to hope and fear after doing wickedly, this was a Matter of far greater Obſcurity ſtill. And had we, here preſent, been left to ourſelves, in all Likelihood we had been, at this Hour, (like Multitudes of other poor Wretches in every Part of the World that is unenlightened by Chriſtianity,) worſhipping Stocks and Stones: or however, we ſhould certainly, in other Reſpects, have been *walking in the Vanity of our Minds, having the Underſtanding darkened, alienated from the Life of God*[b]; *Strangers from the Covenant of Promiſe, having no Hope, and without God in the World*[c].

[a] Matth. vi. 23. [b] Eph. iv. 17, 18. [c] Eph. ii. 12.

But he was graciouſly pleaſed not to leave fallen Men to themſelves, but to furniſh them with needful Knowledge. What human Abilities, when at the beſt, might have diſcovered, they would in all Likelihood have diſcovered (if at all) ſo ſlowly, that we have great Cauſe to believe, the Religion of our firſt Parents was derived from his immediate Inſtruction. But certainly after their Tranſgreſſion, he made an immediate Revelation to them; and thenceforward vouchſafed from time to time various Manifeſtations, to ſuch as would receive them, of his Truths, his Commands, and his Purpoſes: not only republiſhing the original Doctrines of Reaſon, but adding new Articles of Belief, new Promiſes, and new Precepts, as the changing Circumſtances of Things required; till at length, by his Son, our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, he confirmed all his paſt Notifications, and took away all Neceſſity of future ones; acquainting us fully, in the ever-bleſſed Goſpel, with all that we ſhall need to know, or be bound to do, *till Heaven and Earth paſs* [d].

Thus then, beſides thoſe Things in Religion, which our own Reaſon can diſcern, we

[d] Matth. v. 18.

receive

receive others on the Teſtimony of their being revealed by God: as unqueſtionably we ought. For if he, who cannot err, and cannot lie, communicates any Information to us; though it requires us to believe, what we had before not the leaſt apprehenſion of, or ſhould elſe have imagined to be exceedingly ſtrange and unlikely; though it require us to do, what otherwiſe we ſhould neither have thought of doing, nor have choſen to do; yet ſurely his Teſtimony and Command may well be ſufficient Reaſon for both. We admit every Day, upon the Teſtimony one of another, Things utterly unknown to us, and in themſelves extremely improbable: and we act upon ſuch Teſtimony in Matters, on which our Fortunes, our Healths, our Lives, depend: as indeed without doing ſo, the Affairs of the World could not be carried on. Now *if we receive the Witneſs of Men, the Witneſs of God is greater*[e]. And ſince we are able to convey the Knowledge of our Thoughts and our Wills to each other, no Queſtion but God is able to convey his to his Creatures.

[e] 1 John v. 9.

But, allowing that he can, it may be aſked, How do we prove, that he hath conveyed it to Men in the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Revelations? I anſwer, we believe the Jewiſh Revelation, for this plain Reaſon, amongſt others, becauſe the Chriſtian confirms it: and we believe the Chriſtian, chiefly upon the full Proof, which Chriſt and his Apoſtles have given of it. They who ſaw him, with their own Eyes, perform Things which Man could not do; and heard him, with their own Ears, foretell Things, which Man could not foreknow, and yet experienced them to come to paſs: as for inſtance, his healing great Numbers of ſick Perſons with a Word, and raiſing himſelf from the Dead: they muſt be ſure, that ſome Power attended him more than human. And ſince his Doctrines all promoted the ſpiritual Worſhip and Honour of the one true God, and Virtue and Happineſs among Men: they muſt be ſure alſo, that this Power was not that of an evil Spirit, but of a good one: and conſequently, that he came from God, and taught his Will. If then it be true, that he did, in their Preſence, not only deliver ſuch Doc-

trine, but foretell and perform ſuch Things; then their Faith was reaſonable, and ours is ſo too. Now they do in the ſtrongeſt Manner affirm this: as you may read throughout the Goſpels and Acts: and why are they not to be credited? They could not every one of them be miſtaken in it all; and think they ſaw and heard, Day after Day, and Year after Year, Things which they did not, any more than we can be miſtaken in every Thing that we ſee and hear continually. Beſides, they affirm, that they were enabled to do the ſame Wonders themſelves, and enabled others to do them. All this could not be Miſtake too.

And as they could not be deceived in theſe Points, ſo neither could they intend to deceive Mankind. There is all the Appearance in the World of their being fair and honeſt Perſons, that would not deceive for Intereſt. But beſides, what they affirmed was abſolutely againſt their Intereſt. It expoſed them, as they could not but imagine it would, to Reproach, Impriſonment, Stripes, Death itſelf. Yet all theſe Things they underwent patiently, one after another, through

a Courſe of many Years, for the Sake of what they taught; none of them all confeſſing, or being convicted of any Falſhood: which yet they muſt have been, had they been guilty of any: for the Things, which they affirmed, were many, indeed moſt of them, done publicly: and all the Power, and all the Learning, of the World were employed againſt them, from the firſt, to detect them, if poſſible. Yet no body pretends, or ever did pretend, that they were detected. Beſides, if any ſuch Diſcovery had been made, their whole Scheme muſt have been ruined immediately: whereas inſtead of that, they ſpread their Religion (though it was contrary to the eſtabliſhed Superſtitions, the deep-rooted Prejudices, and favourite Vices, of all Mankind) through the whole Earth, within a few Years, by mere Force of Miracles and Arguments, and Innocence, againſt all Oppoſition. Theſe Things ſurely are Proofs ſufficient of our Saviour's coming from God, without ſaying any Thing of the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament, ſo many of which were ſo clearly fulfilled in him.

But then, as all the Facts hitherto mentioned are ancient ones; it may be aſked farther, How can we now be ſure of the Truth of what is ſaid to have been done ſo many Ages ago? I anſwer, By all the ſame Means, which can aſſure us of any other ancient Fact. And there are Multitudes of much ancienter, which no body hath the leaſt Doubt of; and it would be reckoned Madneſs, if they had. The Miracles of Chriſt and his Apoſtles are recorded in the New Teſtament: a Book very fully proved, and indeed acknowledged, to be, the greateſt Part of it, written by the Apoſtles themſelves; and the reſt, in their Days, by their Direction: and no one material Fact of it is, or ever was, ſo far as we can learn, oppoſed by any contrary Evidence whatſoever. Then, that vaſt Numbers of Perſons were converted to this Religion, as they declared, by ſeeing theſe Miracles, and vaſt Numbers more, by the Accounts, which they received of them; and perſevered in their Faith, againſt all worldly Diſcouragements, till at length it became the prevailing one; appears partly from the New Teſtament alſo, partly from

other Books of acknowledged Authority, written in that Age and the following ones, by Heathens and Jews, as well as Chriſtians; and indeed is in the main univerſally owned and notorious.

But ſuppoſing the Facts, on which our Religion is built, to be truly related, yet it may be aſked further, How ſhall we be ſure, that its Doctrines were ſo too, in which it is much eaſier to miſtake? I anſwer again: The Doctrines of the Old Teſtament are atteſted and confirmed by the New. And for thoſe of the New Teſtament; we have our Saviour's own Diſcourſes, recorded by two of his Apoſtles, *Matthew* and *John*, who heard him conſtantly, and by two other Perſons, *Mark* and *Luke*, who at leaſt received them from his conſtant Hearers. We have alſo the Diſcourſes of his firſt Diſciples after his Reſurrection, recorded in the Acts: we have beſides, many Letters written by them, the Epiſtles, ſent on ſeveral Occaſions, for the Inſtruction of ſeveral new planted Churches. Now all theſe agree in the ſame Doctrine. But further, which adds ineſtimable Value

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to what they have ſaid and written, our Lord himſelf promiſed them, that the Spirit of God ſhould *teach them all Things, and bring all Things to their Remembrance, whatever he had ſaid unto them*[f]; *ſhould come and abide with them for ever, and guide them into all Truth*[g]. And accordingly this Spirit did come, and manifeſt his continual Preſence with them by his miraculous Gifts. We have therefore the fulleſt Evidence, that both what they have delivered, as from our Saviour, and what they have ſaid in their own Names, is a true Repreſentation of his Religion.

But another Queſtion is, ſuppoſing the Scripture a true Revelation, ſo far as it goes; how ſhall we know, if it be a full and complete one too, in all Things neceſſary? I anſwer: Since our Saviour had the Spirit without Meaſure, and the Writers of Scripture had as large a Meaſure of it, as their Commiſſion to inſtruct the World required, it is impoſſible, that in ſo many Diſcourſes concerning the Terms of Salvation, as the New Teſtament contains, they

[f] John xiv. 26. [g] John xiv. 16. xvi. 13.

ſhould all have omitted any one Thing neceſſary to the great End, which they had in View. And what was not neceſſary when the Scripture was completed, cannot have become ſo ſince. For *the Faith* was *once* for all *delivered* in it *to the Saints*[h]: and *other Foundation can no Man lay*[i], than what was laid then. The ſacred Penmen themſelves could teach no other Goſpel than Chriſt appointed them: and he hath appointed no one ſince to make Additions to it.

In the Books of Scripture then the Doctrines of our Religion are truly and fully conveyed to us: and we cannot be ſo ſure of any other Conveyance. It is a Confirmation of our Faith indeed, that the earlieſt Chriſtian Writers, after thoſe of Scripture, in all material Points agree with it. But if they did not, no Writers can have equal Authority with inſpired ones. And no unwritten Tradition can long be of any Authority at all. For Things, delivered by Word of Mouth, always vary, more or leſs, in going through but a few Hands. And the World

[h] Jude 3. [i] 1 Cor. iii. 11.

hath

hath experienced, that Articles of Belief, for Want of having Recourſe to the written Rule of them, have greatly changed in many Churches of Chriſtians: but in few or none more, than that of *Rome*, which abſurdly pretends to be unchangeable and infallible. It is in the Scripture alone then, that we, who live in theſe later Ages, can be ſure of finding the Chriſtian Faith preſerved, complete and undefiled: and there we may be ſure of it.

For as to any Pretence or Fear of theſe Books being corrupted and altered, either by Deſign or Miſtake: had the Old Teſtament been depraved in any Thing eſſential, our Saviour and his Apoſtles would have given us Notice of it. And for the New, the ſeveral Parts of it were ſo immediately ſpread through the World, and ſo conſtantly read, in public and in private, by all Chriſtians; and ſo perpetually quoted in all their Diſcourſes, and all the Diſputes of one Sect with another, that they could not poſſibly be changed, by any of them, in any Thing conſiderable. For the reſt would immediately have diſcovered it, and charged them with it, which

which muſt put an End to the Danger. And indeed it is an agreed Point, amongſt all who underſtand theſe Matters, that nothing of this Kind either hath happened or can happen, ſo as to affect any one Article of Faith.

But perhaps it will be alledged, that the Bible was written originally in Languages, which have long been out of common Uſe, and with which but a ſmall Part of Chriſtians now are acquainted: and how ſhall the reſt be ſure, that we have them rightly tranſlated into our own? The plain Anſwer is, that all Tranſlations, made by all Parties, agree in moſt Places, and thoſe of the moſt Importance: and where they diſagree, moderate Conſideration and Inquiry will enable any Perſons, who live in a Country of Knowledge and Freedom, which, God be thanked, is our Caſe, to judge on ſome good Grounds, as far as they need judge, which is right, and which is wrong; which is clear, and which is doubtful. Nor doth any Sect of Chriſtians pretend to accuſe our common Tranſlation of concealing any neceſſary

ceſſary Truth, or aſſerting any deſtructive Error.

But ſuppoſing all this, yet it may be urged, that many Parts of Scripture in our Tranſlation, and in the Original too, are dark and obſcure: and how can it then be the Guide and Rule of our Faith? I anſwer: Theſe are few in Proportion to ſuch as are clear: and were they more, the Spirit of God, we may be ſure, would make all neceſſary Points, in one Part or another, ſufficiently clear. Theſe therefore the moſt ignorant may learn from Scripture; at leaſt by the Help of ſuch Explanations, as they are willing to aſk and truſt in all other Caſes, and much admirable Inſtruction beſides: which if they do but reſpect and obſerve as they ought; they may be content to leave for the Uſe of others, what a little Modeſty will ſhew them is above their own Reach.

But that every Perſon may be enabled the better to diſtinguiſh between the neceſſary Doctrines and the reſt: thoſe, which either Chriſt or his Apoſtles expreſsly taught to be of the former Sort, or the Nature of the Thing

Thing plainly ſhews to be ſuch, have from the earlieſt Times been collected together: and the Profeſſion of them hath been particularly required of all Perſons baptized. Theſe Collections or Summaries are in Scripture called, *The Form of ſound Words* [k], *The Words of Faith* [l], *The Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt* [m]: but in the preſent Language of Chriſtians, *The Creed*, that is, the Belief.

The ancient Church had many ſuch Creeds: ſome longer, ſome ſhorter; differing in Expreſſion, but agreeing in Method and Senſe: of which that called the Apoſtles Creed was one. And it deſerves that Name, not ſo much from any Certainty that the Apoſtles drew it up, as becauſe it contains the Apoſtolical Doctrines; and was uſed by a Church, which, before it corrupted itſelf, was juſtly conſidered as one of the chief Apoſtolical Foundations, I mean the *Roman*.

But neither this, nor any other Creed, hath Authority of its own, equal to Scripture; but derives its principal Authority

[k] 2 Tim. i. 13. [l] 1 Tim. iv. 6. [m] Heb. vi. 1.

from

from being founded on Scripture. Nor is it in the Power of any Man, or Number of Men, either to leſſen or increaſe the fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Faith: which yet the Church of *Rome*, not content with this its primitive Creed, hath profanely attempted: adding twelve Articles more, founded on its own, that is, on no Authority, to the ancient twelve, which ſtand on the Authority of God's Word. But our Church hath wiſely refuſed to go a Step beyond the original Form; ſince all neceſſary Truths are briefly comprehended in it, as will appear when the ſeveral Parts of it come to be expounded, which it is the Duty of every one of us firmly to believe, and openly to profeſs. *For with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteouſneſs, and with the Mouth Confeſſion is made unto Salvation*[n].

[n] Rom. x. 10.

LECTURE VI.

CREED.

Article I. *I believe in God, the Father*, &c.

THE Foundation of all Religion is Faith in God: the Perſuaſion, that there doth, ever did, and ever will exiſt, one Being of unbounded Power and Knowledge, perfect Juſtice, Truth and Goodneſs, the Creator and Preſerver, the Sovereign Lord and Ruler of all Things. With this Article therefore our Creed begins. And as all the reſt are built upon it, ſo the Truth and Certainty of it is plain to every Man, when duly propoſed to his Conſideration, how unlikely ſoever ſome Men would have been to diſcover it of themſelves.

We know, beyond Poſſibility of Doubt, that we now are; and yet the oldeſt of us, but a few Years ago, was not. How then came

came we to be? Whence had we our Beginning? From our Parents, perhaps we may think. But did our Parents know, or do we know in the leaſt, how to form ſuch a Mind as that of Man, with all its Faculties; or ſuch a Body as that of Man, with all its Parts and Members; or even the very ſmalleſt of them? No more, than a Tree knows how to make the Seed that grows into a like Tree: no more, than any common Inſtrument knows how to do the Work, which is done by its Means. Our Parents were only Inſtruments in the Hands of ſome higher Power: and to ſpeak properly, That *it is which made us, and not we ourſelves*[a], or one another. And the ſame is the Caſe of every Animal and every Plant upon the Face of the Earth.

But could our Parents be the Cauſe of our Being; yet ſtill the firſt human Pair muſt have had ſome different Cauſe of theirs. Will it then be ſaid, that there was no firſt? But we cannot conceive this to be poſſible. And it certainly is not true. For we have undoubted Accounts, in ancient Hiſtories,

[a] Pſal. c. 2.

of

of the Time when Men were but few in the World, and inhabited but a ſmall Part of it; and therefore were near their Beginning: Accounts of the Times, when almoſt all Arts and Sciences were invented; which Mankind would not have been long in Being, much leſs from Eternity, without finding out. And upon the whole, there is ſtrong Evidence, that the preſent Frame of Things is not more than about ſix thouſand Years old: and that none of us, here preſent, is 150 Generations diſtant from our firſt Parent.

If it be ſaid, that univerſal Deluges may perhaps have deſtroyed almoſt all the Race of Men, and ſo made that ſeem a new Beginning, which was not: we anſwer, that one ſuch Deluge we own; but that no ſuch can poſſibly happen according to the common Courſe of Nature, as learned Perſons have abundantly ſhewn. And conſequently this proves a higher Power, inſtead of deſtroying the Proof of it.

But without having Recourſe to Hiſtory, it is evident from the very Form and Appearance of this Earth, that it cannot have

been from Eternity. If it had, to mention nothing elſe, the Hills muſt all have been waſhed down by Showers, innumerable Ages ago, to a Level with the Plains [b]. And indeed they, who have thought of theſe Matters, well know and confeſs, that the preſent Conſtitution of the Heavens and Earth both muſt have had a Beginning, and muſt of itſelf come to an End.

To ſay therefore, that Things are by Nature what they are, is to ſay a plain Falſehood, if we mean, that they are ſo by any Neceſſity in their own Natures. For then they muſt always have been ſuch as we ſee them; and not the leaſt Part of any Thing could poſſibly have been at all different from what it is: which is the wildeſt Imagination in the World. The only Nature therefore, which we and the whole Univerſe have, was freely given us by a ſuperior Being. And the Regularity, in which Things go on, is

[b] This Argument is produced from *Theophraſtus*, in Philo περὶ ἀφθαρσίας κόσμου, p. 510; and two Anſwers to it attempted, p. 513: that Mountains may loſe Parts, and gain them again, as Trees do their Leaves; or are ſupported by the internal Fire, which threw them up. The firſt is an abſurd Aſſertion: the latter a groundleſs and falſe one.

no

no more a Proof, that they were of themſelves from everlaſting, or ſhall continue as they are to everlaſting, than the regular Motion of a Clock is a Proof, that no Artiſt made it, or keeps it in Order, or ſhall take it to Pieces. On the contrary, the more complete this Regularity is, and the longer it laſts, the more fully it ſhews the Power of its Author; and not only that, but his Underſtanding and Wiſdom alſo.

Indeed what hath no Underſtanding, hath, in Strictneſs of Speech, no Power; cannot act, but only be acted upon: as all mere Matter is; which never moves, but as it is moved. But were this doubtful: look around you, and ſee what Marks of Underſtanding and Wiſdom appear. Turn your Eyes upon yourſelves: How *fearfully and wonderfully are we made*[c]! Of what an incredible Number and Variety of Parts, (a vaſtly greater than perhaps any of us ſuſpect,) are our Bodies compoſed! How were theſe formed and put together at firſt? What hath cauſed, and what hath limited their Growth ſince? How hath proper and ſuitable Nouriſhment

[c] Pſal. cxxxix. 14.

been distributed to them all? How hath the perpetual Motion of our Blood, and of our Breath, sleeping and waking, both of them so necessary to Life, been carried on? How is it, that we move every Joint belonging to us, instantly, and with such Exactness, without knowing even which Way we go about it? Our Speech, our Hearing, our Sight, every one of our Senses, what amazing Contrivance is there in them; and the more amazing, the more strictly we examine them! In the Works of Men, it is often mere Ignorance, that occasions our Admiration: but in these, the minuter our Inspection and the deeper our Search is, the greater Abundance we always find of accurate Adjustments and unimaginable Precautions.

But then, besides ourselves, the Earth is replenished with numberless other Animals. Those, of which we commonly take Notice, are an extremely small Part of the whole. Different Countries produce very different Sorts. How many, still more different, the great Waters conceal from us, we cannot even guess. Multitudes remain, so little as almost to escape our Sight, with the best Assistance

ſiſtance that we are able to give it; and probably Multitudes more, which eſcape it intirely. But all that we can obſerve, we find, down to the very leaſt, contrived with the ſame inconceivable Art, ſtrangely diverſified, yet uniform at the ſame Time, and perfectly fitted by moſt ſurpriſing Inſtincts for their ſeveral Ways of living, ſo entirely different each from the other.

What Wiſdom and Power muſt it be then, which hath peopled the World in this Manner, and made ſuch Proviſion for the Support of all its Inhabitants: chiefly by the Means of innumerable Kinds of Herbs and Vegetables, juſt as wonderful in their Make, as the Animals themſelves: that hath intermixed the dry Land ſo fitly with Springs and Rivers and Lakes and the Ocean, to ſupply every Thing with neceſſary Moiſture, and make the Communication of the moſt diſtant Parts eaſy: that hath ſurrounded the Earth with Air for us to breathe in, to convey our Voices to each other, and to ſupport Clouds for Rain: that hath cauſed this Air to be moved by Winds, which preſerve it healthful: and *bring thoſe, who go down to*

the Sea in Ships, unto the Haven, where they would be[d]: that hath placed the Sun at so exact a Distance from us, that we are neither burnt up by Heat, nor frozen by Cold; and hath kept Bodies of such incredible Bulk, as the heavenly ones, rolling on, for thousands of Years together, with so orderly and exact a Motion, that the Returns of Day and Night, and of the various annual Seasons, are precisely foreknown; and perfectly suitable for Labour and Rest, and bringing the Fruits of the Earth to Maturity: whereas were almost any one of these Things considerably altered, we must all of Necessity perish.

But then, how small a Part of the Universe our Habitation may be; and how many, perhaps greater, Wonders the rest may contain; we cannot so much as conjecture. The Millions of Miles, that are between us, and the nearest of the celestial Globes, would be astonishing, if mentioned to you. Yet their Distance is as nothing, if compared with the furthest, which we see: and very possibly the furthest, which we see, may be

[d] Psal. cvii. 23, 30.

as nothing to many others: every one of which, we have no Reaſon to doubt, is as full of Regularity and Beauty and Uſe, as our own Abode. And from what Origin can the whole of this proceed, but that which the Pſalmiſt rapturouſly expreſſes: *O Lord, how manifold are thy Works! in Wiſdom haſt thou made them all* [e].

To ſpeak of Chance, as the Cauſe of them, is abſurd beyond meaſure. Chance is merely a Word, to expreſs our own Ignorance: it is nothing, and can do nothing. Suppoſe one of us were aſked, how this Building, in which we are aſſembled, or the ſmalleſt Part of the Dreſs which we wear, came to be what it is; and ſhould anſwer that no Perſon made it, but it jumped together and held together by Chance; would not this be groſs Folly? And how ſhockingly fooliſh muſt it be then, to give the ſame Account of the Exiſtence of a whole World, ſo admirably contrived, adjuſted and conducted throughout! As evidently therefore as any common Piece of Work proves a Workman to have compoſed it, ſo evidently, and very

[e] Pſal. civ. 24.

much more, the immenſe Fabric of the Univerſe proves a Being of unſpeakable Power and Skill to be the Creator of it.

And accordingly, the Belief of a wiſe and mighty Author of all hath been received in every Age and Nation: which clearly ſhews it to be founded in Truth, and written in the Hearts of Men. They corrupted it gradually indeed: firſt by unworthy Repreſentations of the true God, then by adding the Worſhip of falſe Gods, which at length excluded him. But undeniably the primitive Notion was that of an inviſible Mind, the Maker and Ruler of this viſible Frame; which being plainly under one uniform Direction, ſhews itſelf to have one only ſovereign Director and Governor. This Doctrine God himſelf muſt have taught our firſt Parents in the Beginning: He hath confirmed it ſince by Miracles from Time to Time; and perpetuated the Evidence of it in his holy Word.

That he is not perceived by any of our Senſes, is no Objection at all againſt his Being. For our Minds alſo are imperceptible by Senſe. But as they, notwithſtanding, ſhew

ſhew their Exiſtence by moving and diſpoſing of our Bodies according to their Pleaſure; ſo doth God ſhew his, by moving and diſpoſing of all Things as he wills. And the ſame Argument proves his Preſence with all Things. For wherever he acts, there he certainly is: and therefore he is every where. Our Preſence is limited, and extends a very little Way: but what is there to limit him? Our Being is derived from his Command; and therefore depends on it ſtill: but he is underived; and therefore independent abſolutely. Our Powers are only what he hath thought fit to give us: but his Power is infinite: for every Thing depending on him, nothing can reſiſt him. Our Knowledge is every Way imperfect: but he who made all Things, and is preſent with all Things, muſt in the completeſt Manner know all Things, even the moſt hidden Thoughts of the Heart. We are often unjuſt and wicked: but God cannot be otherwiſe than juſt and holy. For the only Reaſons of our failing to do right are, that we either perceive not what is ſo, or elſe are tempted to act contrary to our Perceptions:

ceptions: but God is ſubject to no Miſtake, or Weakneſs of any Kind. And, which is the happieſt Attribute of all for his Creation, he muſt be likewiſe good. For Goodneſs is plainly a right Thing; and therefore he muſt ſee it to be ſo: it is plainly a Perfection; and therefore the perfecteſt Being muſt poſſeſs it in the higheſt Degree. We ſhould be always good ourſelves, if nothing miſled us: and him nothing can miſlead. But the moſt valuable Proof is, that we experience his Goodneſs: for we live in a World full of it. All that we enjoy, and every Capacity of Enjoyment that we have, proceeds from him. Moſt of what we ſuffer proceeds from our own Faults and Follies. And ſo much of it as comes wholly from his Providence, is deſigned for our preſent Improvement and future Reward; unleſs by obſtinate Miſbehaviour we become unfit for Reward: and then we have only ourſelves to blame. For as God is knowing and wiſe; he cannot but obſerve the Difference between good Perſons and bad: as he is juſt and holy; he cannot take Pleaſure in thoſe, who are otherwiſe: and as he is the Governor of the World;

he cannot fail to ſhew his Diſpleaſure in that effectual Manner, which the Ends of Government require. And they certainly do require the bad to be puniſhed, as well as the good to be made happy.

Such then is the Nature of God: to whom in the Creed the Name of *Father* is given, as he is both the Father of the Creation by forming it, and alſo the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and through him our gracious and reconciled Father, as ſhall hereafter be explained. The next Word, *Almighty*, denotes, not barely his irreſiſtible Power, but principally that rightful and abſolute Authority, with which *his Kingdom ruleth over all*[f]. And the laſt Words of the Deſcription, *Maker of Heaven and Earth*, are added; partly to expreſs the Ground of that Authority, his being the Creator, and therefore the Proprietor, of the World; and partly in Oppoſition to the Errors of the Heathen, who worſhipped many Beings in the Heavens and the Earth, as Gods; which, in theſe Terms of our Creed, are by evident Conſequence declared to be no Gods, becauſe

[f] Pſal. ciii. 19.

they

they are the Work of his Hands, *of whom and through whom and to whom are all Things* [g].

The Duties, owing to this our awful Sovereign, will be ſpecified in expounding the ten Commandments, particularly the firſt. At preſent therefore I ſhall only beg you to remember the Apoſtle's Exhortation: *Take Heed, Brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God* [h]. Nothing, but an evil Heart, can make Unbelief deſirable, or even ſupportable. For to every good Heart it muſt be the greateſt Joy, to know that the World is governed by infinite Wiſdom, Juſtice and Goodneſs; and the greateſt Affliction, to have any Doubt of it. If therefore you find the Thought of ſuch a Governor unwelcome; if you could inwardly wiſh there were none; be aſſured, *your Heart is not right* [i]. And though you could, with ſuch a Diſpoſition, bring yourſelf, almoſt or completely, to imagine there is none: what poſſible Security can ſhutting your Eyes give you againſt Danger; or what Excuſe

[g] Rom. xi. 36. [h] Heb. iii. 12. [i] Acts viii. 21.

can

can wilfully denying God make for diſobeying him?

But then obſerve further, that ſuppoſing you do not diſbelieve a God at all, yet if you never think of him, this is not, to any good Purpoſe, believing in him at all: and if you think of him but ſeldom, it is believing in him but little. He, on whom we depend continually, to whom we owe Duty continually, in whoſe Preſence we continually are, ought never to be far from our Thoughts: but we ſhould ſet him before our Eyes ſo conſtantly, as to live in his Fear always. Doing this needs not keep us from common Buſineſs; it needs not keep us from innocent Pleaſures. But it ſhould influence us all effectually, (and happy are we, if it doth) to conduct ourſelves in every Thing, as Perſons who act under the Inſpection of a wiſe and juſt Superior: whom we may indeed forget, if we will; but ſhall be remembered by him: from whom we may depart, but cannot eſcape. In our Choice it is, whether we will be the better or the worſe for him. But one we muſt: and that be-

beyond Expreſſion. *For God will bring every Work into Judgment, with every ſecret Thing; whether it be good, or whether it be evil* [k].

[k] Eccl. xii. 14.

LECTURE VII.

CREED.

Article II. *And in Jeſus Chriſt his only Son our Lord.*

TO *believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth,* is the univerſal Creed of Nature and Reaſon. But divine Revelation adds further Profeſſions to it; of which the firſt is, that of Faith in our ever bleſſed Redeemer: whoſe Direction was, *Ye believe in God: believe alſo in me*[a]. Therefore, that we may believe in him as we ought, he is deſcribed, in the Creed, by his Name and Offices, his Relation to God and to us.

1. His Name, *Jeſus:* by which indeed many of the Jews were called: but it was given him in Obedience to an Appointment from Heaven, made with a peculiar Regard

[a] John xiv. 1.

to

to its proper Meaning. For it ſignifies, a Saviour: which is a Title conferred, in a lower Senſe, on ſeveral Perſons in Scripture, who delivered others from conſiderable Dangers or Evils, or obtained for them conſiderable Benefits and Advantages. Thus the Judges of the Iſraelites, that freed them from the Oppreſſion of their Enemies, are ſaid to be *Saviours*, whom *God raiſed up*[b] to them. And *Joſhua*, who brought them out of the Wilderneſs into the Land of *Canaan*, ſubdued it, and put them in Poſſeſſion of it, not only was in theſe Reſpects a Saviour to them; but from a Foreſight that he would, was called ſo, as his proper Name. For *Joſhua* and *Jeſus* are, in the Original, the ſame Word; only pronounced a little differently. And hence *Joſhua* is conſtantly called *Jeſus* in the Greek Language, and even in our Tranſlation of the New Teſtament, the two only Times that he is mentioned there[c]. But if he deſerved to be named a *Saviour*, how much more did that Perſon, who hath taught and enabled us to

[b] Judges iii. 9, 15. Nehem. ix. 27. [c] Acts vii. 45. Heb. iv. 8.

over-

overcome our ſpiritual, which are infinitely our worſt, Enemies: who hath obtained for us, on moſt equitable Terms, Deliverance from the Puniſhment due to our Guilt; who hath *deſtroyed*, on our behalf, Death, and *him that had the Power of Death*[d]; and will beſtow on us eternal Salvation, in the Kingdom of Heaven? With perfect Juſtice therefore was the Order given to his Virgin Mother, *Thou ſhalt call his Name, Jeſus: for he ſhall ſave his People from their Sins*[e]: only let us remember, that none will be ſaved from them hereafter, that continue to live in them here. For is the holy *Jeſus the Miniſter of Sin? God forbid*[f].

2. His Offices are expreſſed by the Word, *Chriſt*. This, and the Hebrew Word *Meſſiah*, to which it anſwers, in their literal Meaning ſignify, *Anointed*. Oil was anciently in very high Eſteem among the Eaſtern Nations on various Accounts. And, as they were wont to expreſs almoſt every Matter of Importance by Actions, as well as Words; one Way of ſetting any Thing apart, and appropria-

[d] Heb. ii. 14. [e] Matth. i. 21. [f] Gal. ii. 17.

ting it to an honourable Uſe, was by anointing it with Oil. Therefore we find *Jotham*, in his Parable, makes the *Olive Tree* ſpeak of its *Fatneſs*, as that *wherewith they honour God and Man*[g]. Accordingly the Tabernacle, and Temple, and their Furniture, were conſecrated by anointing them. And almoſt every Sacrifice had Oil, mixed with Flower, added to it, when it was offered up. Nor was it uſed only to ſuch Things, but ſuch Perſons, as were diſtinguiſhed in Honour above others: To Kings; who are thence frequently ſtiled in Scripture, *the Lord's Anointed:* To Prieſts; concerning whom God commands, in the Caſe of *Aaron* and his Sons, *Thou ſhalt anoint them, that they may miniſter to me in the Prieſts Office*[h]: And laſtly to Prophets; as where *Elijah* is directed to *anoint Eliſha Prophet in his room*[i].

And when once, by Cuſtom, anointing came to ſignify raiſing any one to a Station of Dignity, the ſame Word was uſed, even on Occaſions where no Oil was actually

[g] Judges ix. 9. [h] Exod. xl. 15. [i] 1 Kings xix. 16.

employed [k]. Thus when *Elijah* was bid to *anoint Hazael to be King over Syria, and Eliſha for Prophet in his own room:* we find not, that he ever did it literally [l]. Again, when God is introduced, as ſaying of the Jewiſh Patriarchs, before *Moſes, Touch not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no Harm* [m]: we have no Ground to think, that they were ever intitled to this Name by any ſolemn outward Unction, performed upon them: but only by the diſtinguiſhed Favour and Regard of Heaven. And in this Senſe it was, that *God anointed* our Saviour *with the Oil of Gladneſs, above his Fellows* [n]: that is, exalted him to a Rank of Dignity and Honour beyond all Creatures. For in his Perſon were united thoſe three Offices, in the higheſt Degree, to which, you have ſeen, Perſons were anciently ſet apart by anointing.

He is the greateſt Prophet, that ever was: having given to Mankind the fulleſt Know-

[k] The Jews ſay that משיחה, *Unction*, ſignifies *Principality* and *Greatneſs*; ענין קצינות וגדולה. Reland. Ant. Hebr. Par. 2. c. 8. § 6. and ſee this further proved, ib. c. 9. § 6.
[l] See 1 Kings xix. 15, 16. Comp. v. 19. and 2 Kings viii. 13. [m] Pſal. cv. 15. [n] Pſal. xlv. 7.

ledge of God's Will, and confirmed his Doctrine by the most illustrious Miracles and Predictions. Hence *Isaiah*, speaking in his Name, long before his Appearance, gave that Description of him, which he so justly in the Synagogue applied to himself: The *Spirit of the Lord is upon me, he hath anointed me*[o] *to preach the Gospel to the Poor*[p]. And St. *Peter*, after his Resurrection, says, that *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with Power*. What these Words mean, the next explain: *who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil; for God was with him*[q]: and the whole means just the same Thing, with what he elsewhere says, that he was *a Man approved of God by Miracles and Wonders and Signs*[r].

In the next Place, he is a Priest of an Order, strictly speaking, confined to his own Person, and of which no other ever was or can be; though in some respects the Priesthood of *Melchizedek* peculiarly resembled

[o] Chald. doth not understand the anointing here to be with material Oil. [p] Isa. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18. [q] Acts x. 38. [r] Acts ii. 22.

and

and prefigured it. He offered up himſelf for the Sins of Mankind, as ſhall hereafter be explained to you. With this Sacrifice he appeared before God, *not in the holy Places made with Hands, which are the Figures of the true, but in Heaven itſelf*[s]; made Reconciliation for us with him, derives to us continually Bleſſings from him; and thus remains for ever *an High Prieſt over the Houſe of God*[t]: compared with whom, the Jewiſh Prieſthood, and the Sacrifices, which they were daily making, were but as empty Shadows to the real Subſtance.

But laſtly, he is in the higheſt Senſe a King; King and Lord of all. Hence, in the ſecond Pſalm, he is called the *Lord's Anointed*, whom he *hath ſet* to be *King on his holy Hill of Sion*[u]. Hence in *Iſaiah* it is propheſied, that he ſhould *ſit upon the Throne of David*, (that is, reign over the People of God) to *order and eſtabliſh it for ever*[w]. And hence his Title in *Daniel* is, *Meſſiah the Prince*[x], or the anointed Prince: the *Son of Man, to whom Dominion ſhould be given, and*

[s] Heb. ix. 24. [t] Heb. x. 21. [u] Pſal. ii. 2, 6.
[w] Iſa. ix. 7. [x] Dan. ix. 25.

a Kingdom; that all People, Nations and Languages, ſhould ſerve him[y]. The Completion of theſe Prophecies we find in the New Teſtament; where, as he profeſſes himſelf *a King*, but *not of a Kingdom of this World*[z]; ſo we find him, *after the ſuffering of Death, crowned with Glory and Honour*[a], infinitely ſuperior to the higheſt of mortal Potentates: *all Power being given unto him in Heaven and in Earth*[b]; *and a Name above every Name, that is named in this World and that to come*[c]: for which Reaſon he is in the Revelation ſtiled, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*[d]. This kingly Power he exerciſes, partly by giving Laws, which every one is bound to obey, and no one may alter, diminiſh, or add to them: partly by protecting his Church againſt all its Enemies, viſible and inviſible, ſo that neither ſhall at any Time totally prevail againſt it; partly by conducting every Member of it, who is dutiful to him, in the Way of Peace and Happineſs, through the Grace of his Spirit,

[y] Dan. vii. 13, 14. [z] John xviii. 33, 36. [a] Heb. ii. 9. [b] Matth. xxviii. 18. [c] Phil. ii. 9. Eph. i. 21. [d] Rev. xix. 16.

and

and the Miniſtry of his Ordinances; and finally he will, in the moſt conſpicuous Manner, diſplay his regal Power, by everlaſtingly rewarding his faithful Subjects; and puniſhing all, who have rejected his Authority, rebelled againſt it, or diſobeyed it.

Theſe then are the Offices, to which God hath anointed, that is, raiſed and exalted him: and in reſpect of which he is called the Chriſt. Let us all be careful to receive him ſuitably to them: and ſo hearken to him as our Prophet; that we may partake of his Atonement, as our Prieſt; and live under his Protection, as our King, for ever and ever.

3. The next Thing, mentioned in the Creed, concerning our Saviour, is the Relation, which he bears to God, as the *only Son* of the Father Almighty. Indeed the Scripture ſpeaks of God, as the Father of all Men; and of all that are good, as his Sons. Good Chriſtians are ſo in a higher Senſe, than other good Men. Angels are the Sons of God, in a Degree ſtill ſuperior to them. But yet, all other Sonſhips are ſo

inconceivably inferior to that of Chriſt, that they are in Compariſon as nothing; and he deſerves notwithſtanding to be called, as he is ſeveral Times called in Scripture, *the only begotten Son* of God[e]; which greateſt of Titles appears to be his due, on ſeveral Accounts.

Firſt, becauſe, being born of a Virgin, he had no earthly Father; but was begotten of God by his Holy Spirit. This Reaſon the Angel gives, in St. *Luke*. *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the Power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee: therefore that holy Thing, which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God*[f].

Secondly, as by Virtue of the abovementioned Offices, to which he was anointed, he received higher Marks of divine Favour, and higher Degrees of divine Likeneſs, than any other Perſon ever did. For, as himſelf argues with the Jews, if, on account of mere earthly Power and Dignity, Men were called *Gods, and Children of the moſt High*[g]; much more might he, *whom the Father*

[e] John i. 14, 18. iii. 16, 18. 1 John iv. 9. [f] Luke i. 35. [g] Pſal. lxxxii. 6.

ſanctified, and ſent into the World, in ſo vaſtly ſuperior a Character, be ſtiled, by way of Eminence, *the Son of God*[h]. And thus is he accordingly ſtiled, on this Account: *I will be his Father, and he ſhall be my Son*[i]: *alſo I will make him my firſt born, higher than the Kings of the Earth*[k].

Thirdly, he is the Son of God, as being by the Power of God *the firſt begotten of the dead*[l], reſtored to Life to die no more. For thus St. *Paul* expreſſes it: *God hath raiſed up Jeſus again, as it is alſo written, Thou art my Son: this Day have I begotten thee*[m].

Fourthly, he is ſo, as being *Heir of all Things*[n], and *by* this *Inheritance having obtained a more excellent Name, than* Men or *Angels*[o]: they being as *Servants in the Houſe of God, he as a Son*[p].

But the moſt important and eminent Senſe, in which Chriſt is the Son of God, remains yet to be mentioned: as, in reſpect of his divine Nature, he derived his Being

[h] John x. 34, &c. [i] 2 Sam. vii. 14. 1 Chron. xvii. 13. Heb. i. 5. [k] Pſal. lxxxix. 27. [l] Rev. i. 5. [m] Acts xiii. 33. [n] Heb. i. 2. [o] Ibid. 4. [p] Heb. iii. 5, 6.

from

from the Father, by an eternal Generation; not as Creatures do, who are made out of nothing, and were made by him; but in a Manner peculiar to himſelf, and inconceivable to us: by which *all the Fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him*[q]; and *he and the Father are*, in the ſtricteſt Union, *one*[r]. For God was his *Father, with whom he had Glory before the World was*[s]: and he *in the Beginning was with God, and was God*[t]; *God over all, bleſſed for ever*[u]. Of this myſterious Doctrine, I ſhall ſpeak ſomewhat further, under the Article of the Holy Ghoſt: and therefore ſhall only ſay at preſent, that being expreſsly revealed, it ought to be implicitly believed; without attempting in vain to be wiſe above what is written; to know more, than God hath enabled us. And now,

4thly, From all theſe Things ariſes, what the Creed mentions in the laſt Place, his Relation to us; *our Lord*. For being the only Son of God, he is Heir and Lord of all in his Father's Houſe. Having triumphed

[q] Col. ii. 9. [r] John x. 30. [s] John xvii. 5. [t] John i. 1. [u] Rom. ix. 5.

over

over the Power of Darkneſs, which held Mankind in Bondage, we are his by Right of Conqueſt: and though *other Lords have had Dominion over us, we are now to make Mention of his Name only*[w], as ſuch: having purchaſed us to himſelf for *a peculiar People*[x] with his own Blood, *we are not our own; for we are bought with a Price*[y]: *and he died for all, that they, which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him, which died for them, and roſe again*[z]. *For to this End Chriſt both died, and roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*[a]: that he might be ſuch, not in Name only, but in Deed and Reality alſo. For *not every one, that ſaith unto him, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: but he, that doth the Will of his Father, which is in Heaven*[b]. To all others his Words will be at the great Day, what they were whilſt on Earth: *Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the Things which I ſay*[c]? Obedience, conſtant, univerſal Obedience, is the only Manner of acknowledging him, that will

[w] Iſa. xxvi. 13. [x] Tit. ii. 14. [y] 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. [z] 2 Cor. v. 15. [a] Rom. xiv. 9. [b] Matth. vii. 21. [c] Luke vi. 46.

finally

finally prove acceptable to him: and in that Manner we have ſolemnly promiſed that we will acknowledge him, and ſerve him all our Days. Thus then let us ever honour him; thus let us aſcribe to him, who is our Prophet, our Prieſt, and our King, our Saviour, our Lord, and our God, *Glory and Dominion, for ever and ever. Amen* [d].

[d] 1 Pet. iv. 11. v. 11. Rev. i. 6.

LECTURE VIII.

CREED.

Article III. *Who was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, born of the Virgin Mary.*

AFTER ſetting forth, in general, the Name and Offices of our bleſſed Redeemer, his Relation to the Father and to us; our Creed goes on to recount the ſeveral Particulars of what he did and ſuffered, what he continues to do ſtill, and will do finally, for our Salvation.

The firſt of theſe is, that *the Word was made Fleſh*[a]: that the eternal Son of God wonderfully joining to himſelf a Body and Soul like ours, united the human Nature with the divine into one Perſon: thus be-

[a] John i. 14.

coming

coming liable to the ſame Neceſſities and Wants, Infirmities and Pains; and endued with the ſame innocent Paſſions, Appetites and Affections, that we are: on which Account we read in the Goſpels of his feeling Hunger, and Pity, and Grief, and Anger, nay, and *increaſing*, as *in Stature*, ſo *in Wiſdom* alſo[b]: not ſurely in reſpect of that Nature, which *in the Beginning was with God, and was God*[c], but of the other, by which he was the Man Chriſt Jeſus[d]. Further than theſe Facts, we are not diſtinctly acquainted with the Extent and Properties of this unparalleled Union. And it is no Wonder, that we are not. For even that of our own Souls with our own Bodies hath many Things in it, utterly beyond our Comprehenſion. We muſt therefore, in all Reaſon, without inſiſting to know, *how theſe Things can be*[e]; confine ourſelves to learn from Scripture, what they are. And it hath plainly taught us, that our bleſſed Lord was *conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, and born of the Virgin Mary*.

[b] Luke ii. 52. [c] John i. 1. [d] 1 Tim. ii. 5. [e] John iii. 9.

Con-

Concerning the Holy Ghoſt, there will be a proper Place to ſpeak more at large, in that Article of the Creed, which directly relates to him. At preſent we are only to conſider his Influence in the Conception of our Saviour: which Conception was not in the ordinary Courſe of Things; but God himſelf, being already his Father with reſpect to that divine Nature, which he had from the Beginning, became again ſo, in a new Senſe, with reſpect to his human Nature too, by the incomprehenſible Operation of his Spirit. For *the Birth of Jeſus Chriſt*, to uſe the Words of Scripture, *was on this wiſe. When as his Mother Mary was eſpouſed to Joſeph; before they came together, ſhe was found with Child of the Holy Ghoſt*[f]; in purſuance of what the Angel had told her, *Thou ſhalt conceive and bring forth a Son, and ſhalt call his Name Jeſus. Then ſaid Mary unto the Angel; How ſhall this be ſeeing I know not a Man? And the Angel anſwered and ſaid unto her: The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the Power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee: there-*

[f] Matth. i. 18.

fore

fore alſo that holy Thing, which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God [g].

And thus, in the Fulneſs of Time, was accompliſhed, what had been intimated as early as the Fall of Man, by that remarkable Expreſſion, that the *Seed of the Woman ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's Head* [h]; and what had been expreſsly ſpoken out by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, 700 Years before our Saviour's Incarnation, *Behold a Virgin ſhall be with Child, and bring forth a Son, and they ſhall call his Name Emmanuel: which, being interpreted, is, God with us* [i]. When the Scripture ſays, that ſuch a Perſon or Thing ſhall be called by ſuch a Name; it frequently means no more, than that they ſhall have a Right to be ſo called; that what that Name ſignifies, ſhall be verified in them, ſhall be true in Relation to them. There are many Inſtances of this in the Old Teſtament. And therefore, as our Saviour's coming in the Fleſh was the moſt effectual and illuſtrious Manifeſtation of God's Preſence with Men, and

[g] Luke i. 31, 34, 35 [h] Gen. iii. 15. [i] Iſa. vii. 14. Matth. i. 23.

Favour

Favour towards them, that could be; though perhaps in common Speech he was ſeldom, if ever, called, yet in the Language of Prophecy he was very juſtly called, *Emmanuel*, or, God is with us. For in his Perſon God was really amongſt Men, in ſuch a Manner, and to ſuch Purpoſes of Grace and Salvation, as he had never been before. And therefore this Name agrees perfectly in Senſe, though it differs in Sound, from his common Name, *Jeſus*, i. e. Saviour.

After ſaying, that he was *born of a Virgin*, the Creed adds, that it was of the Virgin *Mary*: not that we are to ſeek for any peculiar Myſtery in her being called *Mary*; as ſome in the Church of *Rome* have imagined, and accordingly formed groundleſs and ridiculous Derivations of the Word. But indeed the Name was a very common one among the Jews; by which ſeveral Women, mentioned in the New Teſtament, and ſeveral in other Hiſtories, went: and no Intimation is given in Scripture of its having any eſpecial Propriety, or Meaning, in Relation to her. But the Reaſon of inſerting it into the Creed moſt probably was,

becauſe it is ſet down in Scripture, and that by naming the particular Perſon, of whom our Saviour ſprung, he might appear to be of that Family, from which it was foretold he ſhould ariſe, being born of this *Virgin of the Houſe of David* [k].

Still we are very far from thinking lowly of one, whom firſt an Angel from Heaven, then *Elizabeth filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, declared to be *bleſſed among Women* [l]: and who, with the greateſt Reaſon, ſaid of herſelf, *He, that is mighty, hath magnified me, and holy is his Name* [m]. For greatly without Doubt ſhe was magnified, a high Honour ſhe received, in becoming, as *Elizabeth* ſtiles her, *the Mother of our Lord* [n]. But this, however ſingular, was not the moſt valuable Diſtinction of the holy Virgin. In Scripture, no Advantage of any other Kind is ever put on a Level with that of a pious Heart, and a virtuous Life. On the contrary, when on hearing one of our Saviour's Diſcourſes, *a certain Woman of the Company*, in a Tranſport of Admiration and Affection, had cried

[k] Luke i. 27. [l] Luke i. 28, 41, 42. [m] Luke i. 49. [n] Luke i. 43.

out,

out, *Bleſſed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou haſt ſucked:* his Anſwer was; *Yea, rather bleſſed are they, that hear the Word of God, and keep it*[a]. Now of this trueſt Bleſſedneſs the Virgin *Mary* enjoyed a moſt eminent Share: appearing, in all that is ſaid of her, to have been pious and devout, reaſonable and conſiderate, humble and modeſt, mild and gracious, in the utmoſt Degree.

But though, on account of theſe Excellencies, as well as her peculiar Relation to him, ſhe was the Object, both of her Son's dutiful Subjection in his younger Years; and of his tender Care, even when he hung upon the Croſs: yet we find no Footſteps of any ſuch Regard paid her, either by him or his Diſciples, as can give the leaſt Pretence for aſcribing to her thoſe Prerogatives and Powers, which the Church of *Rome* doth. Our Saviour, in more Places than one of the Goſpels, treats her in ſo cold, and ſeemingly negligent a Manner, that one cannot well avoid thinking he did it on Purpoſe, to diſcourage that monſtrous Notion, of her Right,

[a] Luke xi. 27, 28.

as a Mother, to command him, who was her Lord, as well as ours. In the other Parts of the New Teſtament, excepting thoſe, which I have already quoted, or to which I have referred, there is only an incidental Mention made of her occaſionally; as there is of many other Perſons: and not the moſt diſtant Intimation of any ſpecial Honour ſhewn, or directed to be ſhewn her. Yet doth the Romiſh Church appoint Offices of Devotion to her, bearing her Name; addreſs her as *Queen of Heaven*, for ſo they expreſly call her: petition her, almoſt in the ſame Breath with God and our Saviour, that ſhe would beſtow on them Pardon and Grace here, and everlaſting Life hereafter: Things infinitely beyond the Power of any Creature whatever. Nay, ſome of them profeſſedly bind themſelves to pray much oftener to her, than they do to their Maker and Redeemer: and appear accordingly to place much more Confidence in her. And all this, not only without the leaſt Proof, that ſhe hath any Authority in human Affairs, or even any Knowledge of them; but in open Defiance of the Scripture, which

which directs our Prayers to God alone; and particularly of that Paſſage in St. Paul, where the *voluntary Humility* of *worſhipping* even *Angels*, though they are known to be *miniſtring Spirits*, is forbidden, as what may *beguile us of our Reward*; and the Perſons, who practiſe it, condemned, as *not holding the Head*, which is Chriſt [p].

But to return to our Subject. The foregoing Doctrine, of *God manifeſt in the Fleſh*, is undoubtedly one very wonderful Part of that, which the Apoſtle calls *the Myſtery of Godlineſs* [q]. And yet there is nothing in it, either impoſſible, or indeed more difficult to the Almighty, than in thoſe Productions of his, which we commonly call the Courſe of Nature; and wonder at them leſs, for no other Reaſon, but becauſe we ſee them conſtantly; the Manner of both being equally inconceivable.

And as the miraculous Conception, and Birth of Chriſt, was eaſy to infinite Power: ſo was it undoubtedly proper and fit, ſince it was choſen by infinite Wiſdom. Indeed

[p] Col. ii. 18, 19. Heb. i. 14. [q] 1 Tim. iii. 16.

ſome Footſteps of that Wiſdom even we may be able to trace in this wonderful Diſpenſation. It appears moſt becoming the Dignity of ſo extraordinary a Perſon, not to enter into the World in the ordinary Manner. As the *firſt Adam*, poſſeſſed of original Uprightneſs, was formed immediately by the Hand of God; it was ſuitable, that the *ſecond Adam*, who came to reſtore that Uprightneſs, ſhould not be inferior, but indeed ſuperior, in that Reſpect. Accordingly we read, that *the firſt Man was of the Earth, earthy: the ſecond, the Lord from Heaven*[r]. It ſeems requiſite alſo, that he, who was deſigned both for a ſpotleſs Example to us, and a ſpotleſs Sacrifice to God, ſhould be perfectly free from every Degree of that Impurity, and inward Irregularity, which the tainted Nature of a fallen earthly Father may, for ought we know, according to the eſtabliſhed Laws of this World, communicate: whereas being produced in the Manner that he was may have qualified him perfectly for becoming, both a *Lamb without Blemiſh*[s], and a *high Prieſt*, in every Reſpect

[r] 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47. [s] Exod. xii. 5.

and

and Degree, *holy and undefiled, and separate from Sinners*[t].

But whether these or others, concealed from us for wise though perhaps unsearchable Ends, were the Reasons why his Incarnation was in this Manner; yet, for his being incarnate, there are several weighty Reasons very evident; and possibly many more, intirely unseen by us.

By becoming Man, he was capable of becoming the most complete and engaging Pattern of Virtue to Man. The Example of the invisible God might seem too high, and too remote from our View. The Examples of Men were all, in one Respect or another, faulty, and likely to mislead us. But our blessed Saviour, by joining in his own Person Perfection with Humanity, gives us the most encouraging Invitation to endeavour at doing so too, according to our Power. He *was in all Points tempted like as we are, yet without Sin*[u]; *to leave us an Example, that we might follow his Steps*[v]. But in particular, by this Means he hath set us the brightest

[t] Heb. vii. 26. [u] Heb. iv. 15. [v] 1 Pet. ii. 21.

Example of that excellent Virtue, Humility, that ever was, or could be; to this Intent, that *the ſame Mind might be in us, which was in him: who being in the Form of God, took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeneſs of Men*[w]. Of mutual Love alſo he hath ſet before us the moſt amiable Pattern, by this amazing Proof of his Love to Mankind. He, who *was rich* in all the Glories of God, *became poor for our Sakes; that we, through his Poverty, might become rich*[x] in heavenly Bleſſings. He, who was exempted from all Suffering, ſuffered every thing terrible in Life and Death for our Good. Surely theſe are powerful Motives both to give up, and do, and undergo, whatever we are called to, for our Brethren; and to *love one another, as he hath loved us*[y]. His Reſignation likewiſe, his Meekneſs, his Zeal, his Prudence, every one of his Virtues, (and his whole Character was compoſed of Virtues,) are moſt uſeful Leſſons, derived from his appearing in our Nature, that in a very

[w] Phil. ii. 5, 6. 7.
[x] 2 Cor. viii. 9.
[y] John xv. 12.

peculiar

peculiar Manner command our Attention, and require our Imitation.

But further ſtill; by becoming Man he had the Means of moſt familiarly and beneficially inſtructing Men, in every Point of Faith and Practice. *The Word was made Fleſh, and dwelt among us, full of Grace and Truth, and of his Fulneſs have we all received*[z]. This Condeſcenſion enabled him to accommodate his Manner of teaching to the Capacities and Diſpoſitions of his Diſciples, to remove their Prejudices, inſinuate Truth into their Minds gradually; and thus gently training them up to the Kingdom of Heaven, lay ſuch deep Foundations of his Church, as ſhall never be moved.

By taking upon him our Nature, he was likewiſe capable of being a Sacrifice for our Sins; a Doctrine, which in its proper Place ſhall be explained to you: Therefore, ſince we *are Partakers of Fleſh and Blood, he alſo himſelf took Part of the ſame, that, through Death, he might deſtroy him, that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil*[a].

[z] John. i. 14, 16. [a] Heb. ii. 14.

And there was another Benefit, conſequent to his ſuffering in our Nature, *viz.* his riſing again in it; and thus giving us the fulleſt Certainty of our own Reſurrection to eternal Life.

Even while he ſits at the right Hand of the Father, interceding for his Church, and ruling over it, his being Man both makes him a proper Perſon to repreſent Men, and offer up their Devotions; and affords us the moſt ſenſible Aſſurance of his knowing the Wants, and being touched with the Neceſſities, of the Nature in which he ſhares. *Wherefore in all Things it behoved him,* ſays the Apoſtle, *to be made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high Prieſt in Things pertaining unto God. For, in that he himſelf hath ſuffered, being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted* [b]. *Seeing then that we have not a high Prieſt, that cannot be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities: but one, who was in all Points tempted, like as we are: we may come boldly to the Throne of Grace,* in Confidence of *obtaining Mercy, and finding Grace to help, in Time of*

[b] Heb. ii. 17, 18.

Need.

Need[c]. And ſince, laſtly, we have a Judge appointed us, who hath experienced whereof we are made; we may be in the utmoſt Degree certain, that his Judgment will be according to Equity: that, on the one hand, all due Allowances will be made to us; and, on the other, no undue ones muſt be expected by us, in that Day, *when God will judge the World in Righteouſneſs by that Man, whom he hath ordained*[d]; and to whom he hath *given Authority to execute Judgment, becauſe he is the Son of Man*[e].

[c] Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16.
[d] Acts xvii. 31.
[e] John v. 27.

LEC-

LECTURE IX.

CREED.

Article IV. *Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he deſcended into Hell.*

IMmediately after the Mention of our Saviour's Birth, the Creed goes on to the Mention of his Sufferings: for indeed his whole State on Earth was a ſuffering State. By condeſcending to be *made in the Likeneſs of Men* [a], he expoſed himſelf to all the Neceſſities, Infirmities, and Pains, to which Men are naturally ſubject. Beſides this, he underwent the many Inconveniences of a low and unſettled Condition. And, which was yet much heavier, though his whole Life was ſpent in *doing Good* [b], yet was it

[a] Phil. ii. 7. [b] Acts. x. 31.

ſpent alſo in bearing Troubles and Uneaſineſſes from all around him.

The Prejudices and Miſapprehenſions of his Kindred and Diſciples were no ſmall Trial. But the Perverſeneſs and Malice of his Enemies was a great one beyond Example. They were no leſs Perſons that the Rulers and Guides of the Jewiſh People, with their blind Followers: whom the Purity and Humility of his Doctrine, and the very needful Severity of his Reproofs for their Pride, Superſtition, and Wickedneſs, had rendered implacable againſt him. Every Condeſcenſion to win them gained only Contempt from them: every Endeavour to convince and reform them did but exaſperate them: they miſrepreſented and derided, they reviled and threatened, they aſſaulted and perſecuted him: till at Length, the Hour being come, which he knew was the proper one to yield himſelf up to them; they bribed one of his Diſciples to betray him into their Hands; terrified the reſt into forſaking him; and, after a moſt unjuſt Condemnation, followed by a Variety of deſpiteful Uſage amongſt themſelves, to obtain the Execution of their

Sentence they accuſed him to the Roman Power; firſt as a Blaſphemer againſt their Law; and, failing in this, then as a Rebel againſt the Emperor, *Tiberius Cæſar*, the moſt ſuſpicious of Men: by which laſt Suggeſtion they forced the Governor, though declaring himſelf to be ſatisfied of his Innocence, yet to comply with them for his own Safety. After this he was abuſed and ſcourged by the Soldiers, crowned in cruel Mockery with Thorns, and loaded, probably till he ſunk under it, with the Croſs, on which he was to ſuffer.

This Inſtrument of Death conſiſted, as its Name denotes, of two large Pieces of Wood, croſſing each other. On one, the Arms of the condemned Perſon were ſtretched out, and his Hands nailed; on the other, his Feet, joined together, were faſtened in the ſame Manner: and thus he was to hang naked, expoſed to Heat and Cold, till Pain and Faintneſs ended his Life. The Jews, while they executed their own Laws, never crucified any, till they were firſt put to Death ſome other Way; after which, their Bodies were ſometimes hanged on a Tree till the Evening.

Evening. But it seems, that only the worſt of Malefactors were thus treated; who are therefore ſtiled in the Law of *Moſes*, *accurſed*[c]: The *Romans* indeed, and other Nations, crucified Men alive: but uſually none beſides their Slaves; a Sort of Perſons, moſt of them, far lower than the loweſt of Servants amongſt us.

This then was what the Son of God underwent, when, having *taken upon him the Form of a Servant, he became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs*[d]. Now the Torment of hanging thus by Nails, that pierced through Parts of ſo acute a Feeling as the Hands and Feet, could not but be exquiſite; eſpecially as it was almoſt always of long Duration. And therefore this Puniſhment was accounted, in every Reſpect, the ſevereſt of any. Our Saviour indeed continued under it only about three Hours: a much ſmaller Time, tho' a dreadful one, than was uſual. And there are plain Reaſons for his expiring ſo ſoon. He had ſuffered, the whole Night before, and all that Day, a Courſe of barbarous Treatment, ſufficient to wear down

[c] Deut. xxi. 23. [d] Phil. ii. 7, 8.

the

the Strength of a much rougher and robuſter Make, than probably his was. Before this, he had felt Agonies within, grievous enough to make him *ſweat, as it were, great Drops of Blood*[e]. Partly the near View of what he was juſt going, moſt undeſervedly, to ſuffer, might thus affect a Mind, which, having ſo very much Tenderneſs and Senſibility in the Caſe of others, could not be without ſome proportionable Degree of it in his own. And further, the Thought, how ſadly, from the Time of their Creation to that Day, Men had contradicted the End for which they were created; how large a Part of the World would ſtill reject the Salvation which he came to offer, and how few receive it effectually; what Guilt even good Perſons often contract, and how tremendous will be the final Doom of bad ones: theſe Reflections, which naturally would all preſent themſelves to him in the ſtrongeſt Light on this great Occaſion, could not but cauſe vehement Emotions in his Breaſt, zealous as he was for the Glory of God and the eternal Happineſs of Men. But chiefly beyond Compari-

[e] Luke xxii. 44.

ſon, the awful Senſe, that he was to *bear* all theſe innumerable *Sins* of Mankind *in his own Body on the Tree* [f], *being made a Curſe for us, to redeem us from the Curſe of the Law* [g], might well produce Feelings inexpreſſible and inconceivable, which, operating much more powerfully than mere bodily Tortures, and making *his Soul exceeding ſorrowful, even unto Death* [h], might ſo exhauſt his Strength by heightening his Sufferings, as to ſhorten them very conſiderably. And accordingly we read, that when he had hung on the Croſs from the ſixth Hour to the ninth, he cried with a loud Voice, in the Words of the twenty-ſecond Pſalm, where *David* ſpeaks, as a Type and Repreſentative both of his Sufferings and his following Glory, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* not in the leaſt intending, as *David* before him did not, to ſignify a Diſtruſt of his Love, in whom at the ſame Time he claimed an Intereſt, as his God; but only to expreſs, that thoſe Comforts of the divine Preſence, which he uſed to feel, were now, for myſterious Reaſons, with-held from him in that concluding *Hour* of Temptation,

[f] 1 Pet. ii. 24. [g] Gal. iii. 13. [h] Matth. xxvi. 38.

which

which himſelf ſo emphatically called *the Power of Darkneſs*[i]. Then adding Words of the firmeſt Truſt, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit, he bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghoſt*[k].

Thus did God fulfil what he before had ſhewed by the Mouth of all his Prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer[l]. It was intimated in the firſt Prediction, made upon the Fall; namely, that the *Seed of the Woman* ſhould be *bruiſed*[m]. It was prefigured, both in the Sacrifices of the Old Teſtament, and ſeveral remarkable Portions of its Hiſtory. He is mentioned by *David*, as having *his Hands and Feet pierced*[n]: He is largely deſcribed by *Iſaiah*, as *a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief; wounded and bruiſed for our Iniquities, and brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter*[o]: He is expreſly ſtiled by *Daniel*, *Meſſiah the Prince*, that ſhould be *cut off*[p].

Theſe Prophecies, the Creed informs us, were fulfilled under *Pontius Pilate*: for ſo was the then Governor of *Judea* under the

[i] Luke xxii. 53. [k] Luke xxiii. 46. John xix. 30.
[l] Acts iii. 18. [m] Gen. iii. 15. [n] Pſal. xxii. 17.
[o] Iſ. liii. 3, 5, 7. [p] Dan. ix. 25, 26.

Roman Emperor called. And he is named, becauſe the moſt uſual Way of ſignifying at what Time any Thing was done, anciently was by mentioning the Perſon, under whoſe Government it was done: there not being any other Method of reckoning univerſally received, as that of counting by the Year of our Lord is now among Chriſtians. And it was very uſeful to preſerve the Memory of the Date: partly, that in After-ages Inquiry might be better made into the Hiſtories and Records of that Age, concerning theſe extraordinary Events, ſaid to have then happened; and chiefly, that the Meſſiah might appear to have come and died at that exact *Fulneſs of Time*[q], when it was foretold he ſhould. One Mark of it was, that the *Sceptre* was then to be *departed from Judah*[r]: which evidently was departed, when it was reduced to be a Roman Province. Another was, that the ſecond Temple was to be yet ſtanding; for the *Glory of it* was to be *greater than the Glory of the former*[s]: and this could be true only by the fulfilling of another Prophecy, *The*

[q] Gal. iv. 4. [r] Gen. xlix. 10. [s] Hag. ii. 9.

Lord,

Lord, whom ye ſeek, ſhall come to his Temple, even the Meſſenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in[t]. Accordingly he did come to it, and it ſtood but a few Years longer. A third Mark was, that, from *the reſtoring of Jeruſalem*, to *the Meſſiah's being cut off*[u], were to be ſuch a Number of Weeks; each plainly conſiſting, not of ſeven Days, but of ſeven Years: which Number was completed, while *Pontius Pilate* was Governor: and therefore it was requiſite to obſerve, that under him our Saviour ſuffered.

Next to the Mention of his Death, in the Creed, follows that of his Burial: a Favour not allowed by the Romans to thoſe who were crucified, unleſs ſome conſiderable Perſon interceded for it. But the Jewiſh Law requiring, that they ſhould be taken down and buried before Night[w]; and the next Day being a great Feſtival, when the Violation of this Law would give more than ordinary Offence to the People; *Joſeph of Arimathea, an honourable Counſellor, who alſo waited for the Kingdom of God, craved the*

[t] Mal. iii. 1. [u] Dan. ix. 25, 26.
[w] Deut. xxi. 22, 23.

Body of Jesus from *Pilate:* who, after making due Inquiry, *if he were already, and had been any while dead, gave the Body to Joseph*; who buried him respectfully *in his own new Tomb, a Sepulchre hewn out of a Rock*[x]; the Entrance into which the Jews sealed up, and set a Guard over[y]. And thus were his own Predictions fulfilled, that he should be crucified[z], the most unlikely of all Deaths: and at the same time that of *Isaiah*, that he should not only be buried, but with the most unlikely of all Burials in such a Case, *making his Grave with the Rich*[a].

The last Part of this Article is, that *he descended into Hell:* an Assertion founded on Psal. xvi. 10. where *David* propheſies of Christ, what St. *Peter* in the *Acts of the Apostles* explains of him, [b] that *his Soul should not be left in Hell*; which imports, that once he was there. And hence, after some Time it was inserted into our Creed, which in the Beginning had it not. However, being taught in Scripture, the Truth of this Doc-

[x] Matth. xxvii. 57—60. Mark xv. 43—46. Luke xxiii. 50—53. [y] Matth. xxvii. 62—66. [z] Matth. xx. 19. John iii. 14. xii. 32, 33. [a] Is. liii. 9. [b] Acts ii. 24—32.

trine is indubitable: the only Queſtion is about the Meaning of it.

The firſt Thought of moſt, or all Perſons, to be ſure, will be, that the Word *Hell*, in this Article, ſignifies what it doth in common Speech, the Place where Devils and wicked Men are puniſhed. And it hath been imagined, that Chriſt went to triumph over the Devil there; and ſome add, to reſcue Part of the Souls which he held under Confinement [c], by *preaching*, as the Scripture ſaith he did, *to the Spirits that were in Priſon* [d]. But the Place of Torment is never determinately expreſſed in Scripture by the Word *Hades*, which both the Scripture and the Creed uſe in this Article, but by very different ones; though unhappily our Tranſlation hath uſed the ſame Engliſh Word for both, inſtead of calling the former, what it ſtrictly ſignifies, the inviſible State or Region. Beſides, we do not read of our Saviour's *triumphing* over the Devil any where, but *on the Croſs* [e]. And *the Spirits in Priſon*,

[c] Origen againſt Celſus, l. 2. § 42. ſaith, that Chriſt converted Souls to himſelf there, τας βουλομενας, η ἁς εωρα επιτηδειοτερας.

[d] 1 Pet. iii. 19.

[e] Col. ii. 14, 15.

to whom St. *Peter* ſaith Chriſt *by his Spirit preached*, he ſaith alſo were thoſe, *which were diſobedient, when the Long-ſuffering of God waited in the Days of Noah*[f]. And therefore Chriſt's *preaching to them by his Spirit* probably means, his exciting by *his Spirit*, which *ſtrove with*[g] them for a Time, that Patriarch to be a *Preacher of Righteouſneſs* among them, as the ſame St. *Peter*, in his other Epiſtle, calls him[h]. But not hearkening to him then, they are now in Priſon, reſerved for the Sentence of the laſt Day. This Opinion therefore hath no ſufficient Foundation. Nor would it be found, on further Trial, agreeable either to Reaſon or Scripture.

Others have thought the Word, tranſlated *Hell*, to ſignify in this Article, as it ſeems to do in ſome Paſſages of the Old Teſtament, and as the Engliſh Word anciently did, merely a Place under Ground, by which they underſtand, the Grave. And they plead for it, that the firſt Creeds, which mentioned our Saviour's deſcending into Hell, uſed no other Words to expreſs his

[f] 1 Pet. iii. 20. [g] Gen. vi. 3. [h] 2 Pet. ii. 5.

being buried, and therefore deſigned to expreſs it by theſe. But allowing that, ſtill our Creed, expreſſing the Deſcent into Hell after the Burial, muſt mean a different Thing by it.

And indeed the moſt common Meaning, not only among Heathens, but Jews and the firſt Chriſtians, of the Word *Hades*, here tranſlated *Hell*, was in general, that inviſible World, one Part or another of which, the Souls of the Deceaſed, whether good or bad, inhabit. And this, how ſtrange ſoever it may ſeem to the unlearned, yet is by others acknowledged [1]. Probably therefore all that was intended to be taught by the Expreſſion, now before us, is, that when our Saviour died, as his Body was laid in the Grave, ſo his Spirit went where other ſeparate Spirits are. And we ſhould remember, in repeating theſe Words of the Creed, that this is the whole of what we are bound to profeſs by them. But in what Part of Space, or of what Nature, that Receptacle is, in which the Souls of Men continue from their Death till they riſe again, we ſcarce know at all:

[1] See Pearſon on this Article, p. 239, 240.

ex-

excepting that we are ſure it is divided into two extremely different Regions, the Dwelling of the Righteous, called in St. *Luke*, *Abraham's Boſom*, where *Lazarus* was; and that of the Wicked, where *the rich Man* was; *between which there is a great Gulph fixed*[k]. And we have no Proof, that our Saviour went on any Account into the latter: but ſince he told the penitent Thief, that *he ſhould be that Day with him in Paradiſe*[l]; we are certain he was in the former; where *they, which die in the Lord, reſt from their Labours*, and *are* bleſſed[m]; waiting for a ſtill more perfect Happineſs at the Reſurrection of the laſt Day.

How the Soul of our Saviour was employed in this Abode, or for what Reaſons he continued there during this Time, further than that he might *be like unto his Brethren in all Things*[n], we are not told, and need not gueſs. But probably this Article was made Part of

[k] Luke xvi. 22, 23, 26. [l] Luke xxiii. 43. Non ex his verbis in cælo exiſtimandus eſt eſſe paradiſus. Neque enim ipſo die in cælo futurus erat homo Chriſtus Jeſus: ſed in inferno ſecundum animam, in ſepulchro autem ſecundum carnem. Aug. Ep. 57. ad Dardanum. Pearſon, p. 237.

[m] Rev. xiv. 13. [n] Heb. ii. 17.

the

the Creed, in order to aſſert and prove, that he had really a human Soul, which was really ſeparated from his Body. And its Reſidence, during the Separation, in the ſame State and Place, where other *Spirits of juſt Men made perfect* [o] are, ſurely made a vaſt Addition to their Felicity. For *Abraham*, who *rejoiced to ſee his Day* [p] at a Diſtance, muſt be inexpreſſibly more rejoiced to ſee him preſent there. All the good Perſons, whoſe going thither preceded the Death of our Lord, muſt certainly partake in the Joy. And all who came, or ſhall come, after, muſt feel much greater Conſolation for being in a Place, where their Redeemer had been ſeen by ſuch Numbers of his Saints; and to which, in ſome peculiar Senſe, his Preſence is yet continued: for we learn from St. *Paul*, that the immediate Conſequence of a pious Man's *Departure* hence is *being with Chriſt* [q].

But were the Reaſons of his *deſcending into Hades*, or of the Inſertion of it into our Belief, ever ſo obſcure; it may ſuffice us,

[o] Heb. xii. 23. [p] John viii. 56. [q] Phil. i. 23. See Peters on Job, §. 11. p. 399.

that

that the Reaſons of his Sufferings and Death are very plain, as well as very important. With theſe therefore I ſhall conclude this Lecture.

1. The firſt is, that he might be an Example to his Followers. For ſo he became the nobleſt and moſt engaging Pattern imaginable of that great and hard Duty, patient Submiſſion to the Will of God: ſince being of a Rank infinitely ſuperior to the Afflictions of this World, and having done nothing to deſerve the leaſt of them, he moſt willingly choſe, and cheerfully bore, the moſt grievous that were poſſible. Well then may we, Mortals and Sinners, take whatever befalls us, in Life or in Death, meekly and contentedly; *becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an Example, that we ſhould follow his Steps: who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth, who* yet, *when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not; but committed himſelf to him, that judgeth righteouſly*[r]. The Example alſo of Kindneſs and Love to Men he ſhewed yet more fully by his Cruci-

[r] 1 Pet. ii. 23.

fixion,

fixion, than by his Incarnation: foreſeeing, as he plainly did, all the Pains and Torments he ſhould undergo, in executing his great Deſign of reforming and ſaving Mankind; yet deterred by nothing from undertaking it, and perſevering in it. *If therefore he ſo loved us, we ought alſo*, as St. *John* argues, to love one another [s]: and *becauſe he laid down his Life for us, we ought*, if a proper Occaſion require it, even *to lay down our Lives for the Brethren* [t].

2. A ſecond Reaſon of his dying was, that he might thus confirm the Truth of his Doctrine: to which it muſt needs add a very powerful Confirmation, that, though the Jews expected a warlike and victorious Meſſiah, and therefore his taking upon himſelf a meek and ſuffering Character muſt grievouſly prejudice them againſt him; yet he declared from the very firſt, what you read in St. *John*, that *as Moſes lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderneſs, ſo ſhould the Son of Man be lifted up* [u]; *ſignifying*, as the ſame Evangeliſt elſewhere aſſures us, *what Death*

[s] 1 John iv. 11. [t] 1 John iii. 16. [u] John iii. 14.

be

he ſhould die[w]. And he all along perſiſted in this Declaration; rejected every Opportunity of worldly Power; fearleſsly taught the moſt provoking Truths, and voluntarily met what he foretold he ſhould ſuffer. Stronger Evidences of Sincerity, than theſe, a Man cannot give: and therefore St. *John* thus reckons up the Teſtimonies to Chriſt's Miſſion: *There are three, that bear Witneſs in Earth; the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood*[x]. And St. *Paul* obſerves, that *before Pontius Pilate he witneſſed a good Confeſſion*[y]; on Account of which he is called in the Book of *Revelation*, *the faithful Witneſs*, or Martyr[z].

3. The third, and principal Reaſon of our Saviour's Death was, *to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf*[a], that *being juſtified by his Blood, we may be ſaved from Wrath, and reconciled to God*[b]. But as I cannot now enlarge on this Doctrine ſuitably to its Importance; and the Article of *the Forgiveneſs of Sins* will be a proper Place to treat of it; I ſhall only add at preſent, that *God hath*

[w] John xii. 32, 33. xviii. 32.
[x] 1 John v. 8.
[y] 1 Tim. vi. 13.
[z] Rev. i. 5.
[a] Heb. ix. 26.
[b] Rom. v. 9, 10.

made

made him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him[c]. *For if one died for all, then were all dead: and he died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him, which died for them, and roſe again*[d]. This we ſhould do with great Dutifulneſs; for *we are not our own, we are bought with a Price*[e]: and with great Thankfulneſs; for he hath *delivered us from the Bondage of Corruption into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God*[f]. Unto him therefore, *that loved us, and waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Prieſts unto God and his Father, unto him be Glory and Dominion, for ever and ever. Amen*[g].

[c] 2 Cor. v. 21. [d] Ibid. 14, 15. [e] 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.
[f] Rom. viii. 21. [g] Rev. i. 5, 6.

LECTURE X.

CREED.

Article V. *The third Day he roſe again from the dead.*

HAVING carried on the Hiſtory of our Saviour to the loweſt Act of his Humiliation, our Creed ſets forth, in the next Place, how God was pleaſed to exalt him for undergoing it. And the firſt Part of this brighter View of Things, was his Reſurrection: that is, the reſtoring of his Body to a Condition of performing the ſeveral Functions of Life, as before; and the Reunion of his Soul to it. In diſcourſing of which, I ſhall ſpeak, Firſt, concerning the Reality of his riſing again: Secondly, the Circumſtances: Thirdly, the Uſes of it.

I. The Reality; which depends on two Things; that he was really dead, and that he was really alive afterwards.

As for the former: the whole of the Hiſtory ſhews it fully, nor did any of his Oppoſers ever call it in Queſtion. His Crucifixion was public, at Noon-day, before a great Multitude. The Jews who procured it, the Romans who executed it, would both take Care, that it was done effectually. And the piercing of his Side with a Spear, which, by the Blood and Water that followed, plainly appeared to reach his Heart, as it muſt have produced ſome Signs of Life, had there been any remaining; muſt alſo have deſtroyed, in a few Moments, all that could remain. Then, after this, we find him treated as dead, both by Friends and Enemies; *Pilate*, after a particular Inquiry into that very Matter, granting his Body to be buried; one of his Diſciples embalming him with Spices, another laying him in his own Sepulchre; the Jews making no Objection; but fully ſatisfied of his Death, and only careful to guard

guard againſt any Pretence of a Reſurrection.

But that, notwithſtanding, he was afterwards really alive again, which is the other Point, we have Multiplicity of Evidence of the ſtrongeſt Kinds. The Sepulchre was newly hewn out of a Rock, ſhut up with a very large Stone rolled to the Mouth of it, and guarded Night and Day by a Band of Soldiers; who were to watch till the Time was over, within which he had ſaid he ſhould riſe. Yet, on that very Day, the Sepulchre was found open, and the Body was gone. Now by what Means could this come to paſs? To his Diſciples it could be of no poſſible Uſe, to carry on a Deceit, by getting his Corpſe into their Poſſeſſion. For if they had ſucceeded ſo ill with their Maſter at their Head, what could they expect by carrying on the ſame Scheme after they had loſt him, but to come to the ſame End? And what in all Reaſon had they to do, but get quietly out of the Way, at leaſt till the Matter was a little forgotten? Indeed we find in Fact, that far from being enterpriſing, they were ſo diſheartened, even when he

was firſt ſeized, that they all forſook him: and there was little Likelihood, that they ſhould have more Courage to attempt any Thing, juſt after he was executed. Or if they had, what Manner of Chance was there, that when a Band of ſixty Men, uſed to military Diſcipline, were ſet to watch the Grave, they ſhould either find them all aſleep at once, though it was Death to be ſo, and not wake one of them; or be able to convey the Body away from them, though they were awake? Evidently they muſt have failed, and probably have been ſeized, in the Attempt. Or could they have carried their Point; yet, by the Reſiſtance made to them, it muſt have appeared, how unfairly they had carried it: and all Hope of getting a Reſurrection believed muſt have been utterly at an End. Since then the Body was not found, and could not, by any human Means, or indeed for any rational Purpoſe, have been carried away; it muſt have been raiſed by the Power of God, as the Goſpels relate it was.

But to give a full and ſenſible Demonſtration of it, *he ſhewed himſelf alive* to his Diſ-

ciples, *after his Paſſion, by many infallible Proofs, being ſeen of them forty Days*[a]. Now in this they could no more be miſtaken, than you can in ſeeing and hearing me, and knowing me to be alive at this Time. As they had almoſt deſpaired of his riſing again, they were but too backward to believe it: and indeed they would believe it on no other Teſtimony, than that of their own Eyes and Ears; and *Thomas* even not without touching him, and putting his Hands on the Marks of his Wounds: which the reſt, as well as he, when they were *terrified, and ſuppoſed they had ſeen a Spirit*, and not their Lord, were invited to do. *Behold my Hands and my Feet, that it is I myſelf: handle me and ſee; for a Spirit hath not Fleſh and Bones, as ye ſee me have*[b].

They could not, after ſuch Trials, be deceived in ſo plain a Matter. And if it be imagined, that they might intend to deceive others; conſider: They began their Teſtimony to his Reſurrection, at the very Time, and in the very Place, where they affirmed this Fact to have happened: Their Adver-

[a] Acts i. 3. [b] Luke xxiv. 37, 39.

ſaries had all the Power of the Place in their Hands; and all the Advantages, that Men could wiſh, for detecting the Fraud, if it was one; and they were in the ſtrongeſt Manner intereſted and concerned to make Uſe of them. Is it poſſible now, that Men ſo timorous, as the Diſciples plainly were juſt before, ſhould, immediately after, venture, without Need, to bring the juſt Reſentment of both Magiſtrates and People upon themſelves, by aſſerting ſo ſtrange an Event, if it was not true? Yet they did aſſert it: and far from being diſproved in it, thouſands at once, notwithſtanding the moſt powerful worldly Motives, and the deepeſt-rooted Prejudices, to the contrary, were convinced by them. And thus they went on, through many Years, to the End of their Days, all of them ſuffering patiently and joyfully, for the Sake of this Teſtimony, every Thing that could be terrible in Life, and at length Death itſelf: nor is it pretended, that any one of them either retracted at any Time what he had ſaid, or behaved in any Reſpect ſo as to weaken the Credit of it. On the contrary, they were uncommonly pious and

virtuous, as well as bold and unwearied: and, to complete the Strength of their Evidence, they not only taught, illiterate as they were, a Doctrine more worthy of God, than the wiſeſt of Men had known before, profeſſing to have received it from their Maſter's Mouth; but they confirmed the whole by vaſt Numbers of Miracles, which he enabled them, and they enabled their Followers, to perform, both during that Age and the next.

This is briefly the Proof of our Saviour's Reſurrection. And if this be ſufficient Proof; then it is no Objection, that more than ſufficient was not given: for Inſtance, that he did not appear to the Rulers and whole People. They had no Way deſerved it. He was no Way bound to it. Nor doth God, in any Caſe, give Men juſt ſuch Evidence, as they pleaſe; but ſuch as he knows to be enough for honeſt Minds: and if others will not believe without more, they muſt take the Conſequences. Chriſt appeared to the twelve Apoſtles often: to 500 Perſons at once beſides. If this Number be thought too ſmall, when was ever the tenth Part of

it required in any other Matter? And if Chriſt was to appear to all the Jews, why not to all the Gentiles? Why not to all us at this Day? We have no Proof, that any one, who deſired it, was refuſed ſeeing him. Poſſibly many, certainly St. *Paul*, were converted by ſeeing him. Some perhaps nothing would have convinced: others would not have owned their Conviction. This would have made ſtrange Confuſion. And had the whole Nation been convinced, their Notions of the Meſſiah's temporal Kingdom would probably have thrown them at the ſame Time into a Rebellion againſt the *Romans*; or however, the Suſpicions of the *Romans* would have driven them into one: and then the Goſpel would have been thought a mere political Artifice, to ſerve a favourite Purpoſe. Nay, had they continued quiet, and the *Romans* let them alone; even then we ſhould have loſt that Evidence for the Truth of our Religion, which ariſes from the Perſecutions, undergone by the firſt Teachers of it: from the very advantageous Circumſtances, that the Jews our Adverſaries have been the Keepers of thoſe Prophecies, which prove Chriſt to

be

be come: and alſo from their wonderful Diſperſion and Preſervation: beſides the Proof which will ariſe, in God's good Time, from their Converſion to Chriſtianity.

II. Thus much for the Reality of Chriſt's Reſurrection. The Circumſtances of it, which was the ſecond Head propoſed, it is beſt that you ſhould read in the New Teſtament, where they are told at large. And if the Accounts, which the ſeveral Evangeliſts give, ſhould ſeem not eaſy to be reconciled in ſome Particulars; you will recollect, that nothing is more common in all Hiſtorians, than for one to omit what another relates; to tell but Part of what another tells more fully; to join cloſe together in Writing, what happened at ſome Diſtance of Time in Fact; and to neglect a trifling Exactneſs in Points, that are not material. And the Spirit of God, which directed the Goſpel Hiſtorians, might with great Wiſdom permit them to do thus: it being a ſtrong Proof to every conſiderate Mind, that they did not contrive together what Story they ſhould tell; but that each related, fairly and artleſsly, what

what he ſaw and heard at the Time, and recollected afterwards, concerning this great Fact: of which the more abſolutely certain they were in general, the leſs they would think of being accurate in every little Part; and of drawing up a methodical, and minute, and ſcrupulouſly ſtrict Narration of the whole that had paſſed.

But there is one Circumſtance, which requires to be conſidered more diſtinctly; that of the Time. The almoſt conſtant Expreſſion of Scripture concerning this is the ſame with that of the Creed, that *he roſe again the third Day*: reckoning the Day of his Death for the firſt; the Day, which he continued dead, for the ſecond; The Day of his Reſurrection for the third. And this is the common Way of computing every where. Thus the Jews computed the eighth Day, on which their Children were to be circumciſed. Thus alſo the Phyſicians call that a Tertian, or third Day Ague, in which there is but one Day wholly free from it. And thus Men reckon in all Caſes. Sometimes the Expreſſion in Scripture is, that *he ſhould*

riſe

riſe after three Days: meaning, not after the third Day was ended, but after it was begun. Juſt as when *Rehoboam* had ſaid unto the People, *Come again unto me after three Days*, it follows, *So all the People came to Rehoboam on the third Day, as the King bade, ſaying, Come again to me on the third Day*[c]. And in one ſingle Place of the New Teſtament it is ſaid, *the Son of Man ſhould be in the Heart of the Earth three Days and three Nights*[d]. But this without Doubt was intended to be underſtood conformably to the reſt: as it well may. For a Day and Night in the Jewiſh Language is no more, than what we commonly call a Day in ours. Hence we find in the Book of *Eſther*, that when ſhe had appointed the Jews to faſt for her good Succeſs, *neither eating nor drinking three Days, Night nor Day*; that is, to faſt three Days and three Nights; and, after that, ſhe *would go in to the King* to petition for them; the very next Words, notwithſtanding, are, that *on the third Day ſhe put on her royal Apparel*, and went into the

[c] 2 Chron. x. 5, 12. See Whitby on Mark vii. 31.
[d] Matth. xii. 40.

King's

King's Preſence [e]. Again, when we read, that Elijah went 40 Days and 40 Nights to Horeb the Mount of God, 1 Kings xix. 8. we have no Cauſe to think the Meaning is, that he travelled inceſſantly Night and Day; for ſo his Journey muſt have been much ſooner ended: but that he employed in it ſuch a Part of every Day, during all that Time, as he was conveniently able. This Way of ſpeaking may ſeem ſtrange to us: but the Jews underſtand it ſo well, that not a Man of them, excepting a very weak one of late Date [f], hath ever pretended to raiſe an Objection from this Paſſage, though very ſlight Pretences will ſerve their Turn [g]. Thus then our Saviour, dying on Friday, and riſing on Sunday, was dead three Days, and yet roſe the third: which was a ſufficient Space of Time to prove him really dead; but not ſufficient, either for him to ſee Corruption, or for his Enemies to leave off watching his Grave, or for his

[e] Eſth. iv. 16. v. 1. See Whitby on Matth. xii. 40.
[f] Nizzachon vet. in Wagenſeil, p. 236. who objects, that at moſt it could be but three Days and two Nights.
[g] Concerning this whole Matter, ſee Reland. Ant. 4. 1. 21.

Diſ-

Diſciples to deſpair abſolutely and totally: and therefore no fitter Time could have been fixed.

III. The third Point to be conſidered is; The Uſes of the Reſurrection of Chriſt: which are great and many.

In general, it appears plainly from hence, that he really came from God; and that therefore whatever he hath commanded muſt be done; and whatever he hath affirmed, promiſed, or threatened, will be found true. For there can poſſibly be no ſtronger Proof of his divine Miſſion, than, when he had been openly put to Death as a Deceiver, for God to reverſe the Sentence in ſo extraordinary a Manner, as reſtoring him to Life again. This was the great Evidence, to which he had before his Death appealed. No one either did, or could, object againſt it, as not being a deciſive one. And therefore on its coming to paſs, as he had foretold it would, he is juſtly ſaid by the Apoſtle to be *declared the Son of God with Power, by the Reſurrection from the Dead*[b]. But there

[b] Rom. i. 4.

are

are two Things proved by it more particularly.

1. That his Sufferings are accepted by our heavenly Father, as a full Atonement for the Sins of Men. For ſince God hath looſed the Bands of the Grave, with which he was holden on our Account; it is manifeſt, that he hath completed the Satisfaction owing from us; that he hath *through Death deſtroyed him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil; and delivered thoſe, who through Fear of it, were all their Life-time ſubject to Bondage*[i]. If then we do, by Faith and Repentance, qualify ourſelves to receive the Pardon, that he is authorized to give; we may boldly ſay, with the Apoſtle, *Who ſhall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died; yea rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right Hand of God, who maketh Interceſſion for us*[k].

2. From our Saviour's Reſurrection appears the Certainty of our own. The Promiſe,

[i] Heb. ii. 14, 15. [k] Rom. viii. 33, 34.

which

which he made, was, that *every one who believed on him ſhould have everlaſting Life, and he would raiſe him up at the laſt Day*[l]: and to ſhew the Truth of it, he raiſed up himſelf from the Death, which he had ſuffered for the Sins of Men. This is a Proof, clear and ſtrong beyond all Exception or Cavil. Since Chriſt is riſen, our Reſurrection is poſſible: and ſince Chriſt hath promiſed, it is certain. *If* then *we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe again*, we muſt believe too, as St. *Paul* juſtly argues, that *them alſo, which ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him. For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God; and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt; and they, which are alive and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, and ſo ſhall we be ever with the Lord*[m]. *Bleſſed* therefore *be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, according to his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively Hope, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead; to an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled; that*

[l] John vi. 40. [m] 1 Theſſ. iv. 14, 16. 17.

fadeth

fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us[n]. And may *the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant make us perfect in every good Work, to do his Will; working in us that which is well pleasing in his Sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be Glory, for ever and ever. Amen*[o].

[n] 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. [o] Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

LEC-

LECTURE XI.

CREED.

Article VI. *He aſcended into Heaven, and ſitteth on the right Hand of God the Father Almighty.*

THE firſt Care of our bleſſed Lord, in Conſequence of his Reſurrection, was to ſatisfy his Diſciples fully of the Truth of it: the next, to fit them for inſtructing Mankind in his Religion, of which it was one principal Doctrine and Evidence. *He* therefore *ſhewed himſelf alive to them, after his Paſſion, by many infallible Proofs; being ſeen of them forty Days; and ſpeaking of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*[a]. This being done, as he had now gone through the whole of his Work on Earth;

[a] Acts i. 3.

it was proper, that he ſhould return to that happy Place, from whence his Compaſſion to a loſt World had brought him down: according to the Words of his own Prayer; *Father, the Hour is come; I have glorified thee on Earth: I have finiſhed the Work, which thou gaveſt me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the Glory, which I had with thee, before the World was* [b]: There did not remain any further Reaſon for his appearing perſonally amongſt Men; till he ſhould *come again, to judge the quick and the dead.* Many Ages were to paſs *before that great and terrible Day of the Lord* [c]. It was fit therefore, that, as St. *Peter* ſpeaks, *the Heaven* ſhould *receive* him, *until the Times of the Reſtitution of all Things* [d].

And, though the Redemption of Mankind was completed by him, ſo far as, in this lower World, it could be; yet there was left an important Part of it, to be accompliſhed above. The Jewiſh Diſpenſation, as the Epiſtle to the Hebrews more eſpecially informs us, was *a Shadow of good Things*

[b] John xvii. 4, 5. [c] Joel ii. 31. [d] Acts iii. 21.

to

to come[e]. As therefore, under this, the great Sacrifice of Atonement was yearly slain without the Sanctuary first; and then the high Priest entered alone, with the Blood of it, into the most holy Place; there to offer it before the Lord, and atone for the Sins of the People: so, in the Gospel Age, was our blessed Saviour, first, as *the Lamb of God*[f], to be sacrificed for our Sins on Earth; and then, as the *high Priest of our Profession*[g], to *enter, with his own Blood, into* Heaven; *the true holy Place*, of which the other was *a Figure*; there *to appear* with it, *in the Presence of God, for us*[h]: and thus, having *offered one Sacrifice for Sins*, he was *for ever to sit down on the right Hand of God*[i].

When the Time therefore was come, for this Purpose of divine Wisdom to take Effect; having gradually prepared the Minds of his Apostles to bear his Departure, he, in the last Place, with his usual Tenderness, gave them all a solemn Blessing: the Words of which indeed are not delivered down to

[e] Heb. x. 1. [f] John i. 29. [g] Heb. iii. 1.
[h] Heb. ix. 12, 24. [i] Heb. x. 12.

us; but probably they might not be unlike, and certainly they could not well be more affectionate, than those, which we find he used for their Consolation, even before his Sufferings, on a more distant Prospect of his being taken from them. *Let not your Heart be troubled: believe in God; believe also in me. I go to prepare a Place for you; and I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter: that he may abide with you for ever. Peace I leave with you: my Peace I give unto you: not as the World giveth, give I unto you. Let not your Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*[k]. *It is expedient for you, that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: But if I depart, I will send him unto you, and your Heart shall rejoice, and your Joy no Man taketh from you. These Things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have Peace. In the World ye shall have Tribulation:*

[k] John xiv. 1, 2, 3, 13, 16, 27.

but

but be of good Cheer; I have overcome the World[l].

Undoubtedly with ſuch like Words of Grace and Affection, which every good Chriſtian may and ought to conſider as ſpoken to himſelf, did our Lord, before his Departure, comfort his Diſciples under the immediate View of that intereſting Event. *And it came to paſs*, the Evangeliſts informs us, *that as he was yet bleſſing them, while they beheld, he was taken up: and a Cloud received him out of their Sight* [m].

It is hardly poſſible to conceive ſtronger or more various Emotions of Mind, than thoſe, with which the Breaſt of every one of his Followers muſt be filled, on this Occaſion: of Surpriſe and Aſtoniſhment at what they had ſeen; of Gratitude and Tenderneſs, in Return for what they had heard; of Grief and Fear concerning their now ſolitary Condition; yet mixed, at the ſame Time, with Submiſſion and Hope, and faithful Truſt in their dear Lord. But, as he himſelf had told them, *If they loved him, they would rejoice,*

[l] John xvi. 7, 22, 33. [m] Luke xxiv. 51. Acts i. 9.

because he went unto the Father[n]; so in fact, amidst all the Passions working within them, this prevailed above the rest; and triumphant Gladness of Heart was the Feeling, that took Possession, and dwelt with them. *They worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great Joy: and were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God*[o].

Let us then rejoice also in this glorious Exaltation of Christ our Head. Let us consider the Opportunity it gives us, of exercising that *Faith* in him, which the Apostle justly calls *the Evidence of Things not seen*[p]; and of obtaining a Reward, suitable to the greater Virtue and Piety that we shew, in conducting aright our Understandings, our Hearts and our Lives, under a lower, and yet sufficient, Degree of Evidence for our holy Religion. *Because thou hast seen me*, saith he himself to St. *Thomas*, *thou hast believed: blessed are they, that have not seen, and yet have believed*[q]. This Blessedness therefore, by his Ascension, he hath

[n] John xiv. 28. [o] Luke xxiv. 52. [p] Heb. xi. 1. [q] John xx. 29.

left to his whole Church the Means of acquiring: *that the Trial of your Faith*, as St. *Peter* expreſſes it, *may be found unto Praiſe and Honour and Glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt: whom not having ſeen, ye love; and in whom, though now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory; receiving the End of your Faith, the Salvation of your Souls*[r]. Let us conſider too, that if his Abſence tries our Faith, the Manner of his going away powerfully confirms it. For the Apoſtles were Eye-witneſſes of his aſcending into the Clouds: and what ſtronger Proof need we, of his coming from God, than his being thus taken up to him again; according to his own repeated Predictions; beſides the remarkable, though obſcurer, Intimations of the ſame Thing in the Old Teſtament?

Nor let it ſeem ſtrange, that the Scripture ſhould ſpeak of one eſpecial Place, as the peculiar and appropriated Reſidence of God. We acknowledge, that he is, and

[r] 1 Pet. i. 7, 8, 9.

cannot but be, every where. *Heaven and Earth are full of the Majesty of his Glory*[s]: yea, *the Heaven, and Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain him*[t]. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there: If I go down to Hell, thou art there also. If I take the Wings of the Morning, and remain in the uttermost Parts of the Sea; even there shall thy Hand lead me, and thy right Hand shall hold me*[u]. Yet, notwithstanding this, the Scripture constantly mentions him, as having condescended to establish his Throne in one particular Place; and exhibit himself there, in the Symbol of Light inaccessible: where therefore his holy Angels attend upon him, and see his Face; from whence he issues forth his Commands, as Princes do theirs from the royal Palace; and is represented, as viewing and observing the Actions of his Creatures; and pouring down Blessings or Vengeance, as their Behaviour requires. *The Lord is in his holy Temple, the Lord's Seat is in Heaven: his*

[s] Te Deum. [t] 1 Kings viii. 27. [u] Psal. cxxxix. 7—10.

Eyes

Eyes behold, his Eyelids try, the Children of Men[v]. Here it is, that *thouſand thouſands miniſter unto him; and ten thouſand Times ten thouſand ſtand before him*[x], celebrating his Praiſes, and rejoicing in the Light of his Countenance. For *in his Preſence is the Fullneſs of Joy, and at his right Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore*[y].

Into this bleſſed Place then did our Saviour aſcend: and there, as the Creed, in Conformity with Scripture, teaches, *ſat down at the right Hand of the Father*. Not that God, who is an infinite Spirit, and by the Word of his Power doth whatever he pleaſes, both in Heaven and Earth; either hath, or needs, bodily Members, for Inſtruments of Perception or Action, like our imperfect Nature. But theſe Things are figuratively aſcribed to him, in Condeſcenſion to human Capacities. And the Meaning of ſuch Figures is eaſily underſtood. He is the King of the whole World. Now into a King's immediate Preſence not all Perſons are uſually admitted. And of thoſe, who are, not all poſſeſs the ſame Rank and Degree

[v] Pſal. xi. 4. [x] Dan. vii. 10. [y] Pſal. xvi. 12.

of

of Nearneſs to him: but every one ſuch as he pleaſes to appoint. Now the higheſt Mark of Dignity, which the Eaſtern Monarchs conferred on the Perſon, whom they eſteemed and favoured moſt, was placing him, on Occaſions of Solemnity, at their right Hand; the ſecond in Honour was next to the Royal Perſon, on the other Side; and the reſt of the Court ſucceeded in the ſame Order. Thus, when the Mother of King *Solomon* came to petition for *Adonijah*, the Scripture informs us, *he ſat down on the Throne, and cauſed a Seat to be ſet for her, and ſhe ſat on his right Hand*[z]. And when the Sons of *Zebedee* had, by Miſtake, imagined the Kingdom of our Saviour to be like one of this World, their Petition was, *that they might ſit, one on his right Hand, the other on his left, in his Kingdom*[a]. Sometimes the Poſture of ſtanding is mentioned: as Pſal. xlv. 9. *on thy right Hand did ſtand the Queen in Gold of Ophir*. And, when the Court of Heaven, attending on their Sovereign, is deſcribed; I *ſaw*, ſaith the Prophet, *the Lord ſitting on his Throne; and all the Hoſt of*

[z] 1 Kings ii. 19. [a] Matth. xx. 21.

Heaven

Heaven ſtanding by him, on his right Hand and on his left [b]. When therefore our bleſſed Lord is repreſented by St. *Stephen* to ſtand, or in the cx. Pſalm, and frequently in the New Teſtament, to ſit at the right Hand of God: we are to conceive by it, not that he is confined to this or that Poſture or Place; but that he is raiſed, in reſpect of his human Nature, to a Rank and Station above all Creatures; poſſeſſed of the fulleſt Happineſs, the higheſt Honour, and the moſt ſovereign Authority: that Authority, in which *Daniel* foretells his being inveſted: *I ſaw, and behold, one, like the Son of Man, came with the Clouds of Heaven; and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him Dominion and Glory and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations and Languages ſhould ſerve him: his Dominion is an everlaſting Dominion, which ſhall not paſs away; and his Kingdom, that which ſhall not be deſtroyed* [c]. The fulfilling of which Prophecy is thus recorded by the Apoſtle. *God raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own right Hand in the heavenly Places, far*

[b] 1 Kings xxii, 19. [c] Dan. vii. 13, 14.

above

above all Principality and Power, and Might and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come[d]; *that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth*[e]: *And he must reign, till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet*[f]. Sitting at God's right Hand implies this Preeminence: *for to which of the Angels said God at any Time, Sit on my right Hand, until I make thine Enemies thy Footstool*[g]?

Indeed *all Power, both in Heaven and Earth, was given to*[h] our Saviour before his Ascension: but not, till afterwards, was his Title to it publicly recognized, and Possession of it solemnly taken by him: which, in other Words, *is sitting down at the right Hand of God.*

But let us consider, not only the Nature of our Saviour's Exaltation; but, what principally concerns us, the Benefits of it to Mankind, which are three: his sending the Holy Spirit to abide for ever with his

[d] Eph. i. 20, 21. [e] Phil. ii. 10. [f] 1 Cor. xv. 25.
[g] Heb. i. 13. [h] Matth. xxviii. 18.

Church;

Church: his interceding for it with the Father: his powerful Protection of it againſt its Enemies.

1. His ſending the Holy Spirit. This was reſerved, with great Wiſdom, till after his Aſcenſion; both becauſe it was then moſt needed, to comfort his Diſciples under the Loſs of his perſonal Preſence; and alſo, becauſe it afforded a new Evidence of his divine Power, that, far from being in a worſe Condition by his Departure, they were endued with higher Degrees of miraculous Gifts, than ever they had been before. St. *John* therefore, upon our Saviour's promiſing the Spirit to them who ſhould believe on him, obſerves, that *the Spirit was not yet given, becauſe Jeſus was not yet glorified*[i]. And St. *Peter*, on the Day when it was beſtowed, ſaith, *Therefore, being by the right Hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the Promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this, which ye now ſee and hear*[k]. The miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt indeed, being no longer neceſſary, ceaſed many Ages ago: but his

[i] John vii. 39. [k] Acts ii. 33.

ſanc-

ſanctifying Graces, a much more important Bleſſing, which we ſhall always need, continue ſtill; and conſtitute his preſent Share in the Work of our Redemption: agreeably to the Aſſurance, which our bleſſed Lord gave, of *another Comforter to abide with us, and dwell in us for ever*[l].

2. His Interceſſion with the Father. For his Oblation of himſelf being accepted, as the Foundation of a new Covenant of Mercy and Favour; we have now an Advocate in Heaven, ſure to prevail: *an high Prieſt, that can be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities, having been tempted in all Points as we are*[m], ever appearing for us in the Preſence of God; and efficaciouſly pleading the Pardon, which he hath purchaſed, for all who repent of and forſake their Sins. *Who then is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died; yea rather, that is riſen again; who is even at the right Hand of God; who alſo maketh Interceſſion for us*[n].

3. His Protection of his Church againſt all its Enemies, ſpiritual and temporal.

[l] John xiv. 16, 17. [m] Heb. iv. 15. [n] Rom. viii. 34.

The

The Attempts of the former he defeats by the abovementioned Methods, the Influences of his Spirit to preſerve us from Sin, and the Efficacy of his Interceſſion to procure us Pardon on moſt equitable Terms, whenever we fall into it. As for the latter: upon the firſt Oppoſers of his Church, the Jewiſh and Roman Perſecutors, his vindictive Power hath been moſt remarkably exerciſed: and the ſucceeding Adverſaries of Religion, in every Age, have ſerved, and ſhall ſerve, only for a Trial of *the Faith and Patience of the Saints* [o]: generally, without prevailing to their Harm even here; and always being ſubſervient to their Happineſs hereafter: till at Length the appointed Time ſhall come, when *the Kingdoms of this World ſhall become the Kingdoms of the Lord and his Chriſt* [p]: and having reigned on this Earth, till its Period arrives, he ſhall reſign up to God his Kingdom of Grace, its End being accompliſhed; and reign over his Saints, in that of Glory, for ever and ever: fully performing that invaluable Promiſe, *To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me*

[o] Rev. xiii. 10. [p] Rev. xi. 15.

in

in my Throne: even as I alſo overcame, and am ſat down with my Father in his Throne [q].

Theſe Things being ſo, inſtead of amuſing ourſelves with the ſpeculative Conſideration of his Aſcenſion, and the Reaſons of it; we ſhould learn from his Departure to prepare for his Return. To this was the Attention of thoſe, who ſaw it, directed by the Angels. *Ye Men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into Heaven? This ſame Jeſus, which is taken up from you, ſhall ſo come, in like Manner as ye have ſeen him go into Heaven* [r]. The preſent Article of our Creed is, that he *ſitteth at the right Hand of God.* The next is, *that from thence he ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead.* And what ſhould this very cloſe Connexion teach us, but that we all be careful to behave in ſuch Manner, that we may be ready to *meet our Lord* [s] at his coming, and *enter* with him *into his Joy* [t]? He hath deſcended upon Earth to procure us a Right to future Happineſs; and inſtruct us, how to obtain it: he is

[q] Rev. iii. 21. [r] Acts i. 11. [s] 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. [t] Matth. xxv. 21.

now ascended up into Heaven, *to prepare a Place for us*[u]: there seated in Glory, he invites us to him. What then remains, but that we fix *our Hearts where our Treasure is*[w]; and *set our Affections on those Things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right Hand of God*[x]? But in vain do we rejoice in a glorified Saviour, unless we become *his Friends, by doing what he commands us*[y]: in vain do we lift up our Eyes and our Wishes to his happy Abode; unless, by resembling him now in Purity and Holiness, we qualify ourselves to partake hereafter the Resemblance of his Glory. *Who shall ascend into the Hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy Place? Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt Life, and doth the Thing which is right, and speaketh the Truth from his Heart. He that hath used no Deceit in his Tongue, nor done Evil to his Neighbour, and hath not slandered his Neighbour. He that setteth not by himself: but is lowly in his own Eyes. In whose Eyes a vile Person is contemned: but he honoureth them, that fear the Lord. He*

[u] John xiv. 2. [w] Matth. vi. 21. [x] Col. iii. 1.
[y] John xv. 14.

that hath clean Hands and a pure Heart, and hath not lift up his Soul unto Vanity. He ſhall receive the Bleſſing from the Lord, and Righteouſneſs from the God of his Salvation[z].

[z] Pſal. xv. and xxiv.

LEC-

LECTURE XII.

CREED.

Article VII. *From thence he ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

THIS is the great and awful Doctrine, which makes all the preceding ones ſo important to us: that *God hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs by that Man, whom he hath ordained*[a]: a Truth, the Belief of which it infinitely concerns every one of us to ſettle well in our Souls, and be duly affected by it.

The Reaſon of our Minds, and even the Feelings of our Hearts, give us very ſtrong Grounds to be perſuaded of a future Judgment, had we no further Evidence. We are all of us, by Nature, capable of perceiving,

[a] Acts xvii. 31.

what is juſt and right for us to do, and what is otherwiſe; we are all capable of acting according to this Perception: we all ſee, it is fit we ſhould; and fit we ſhould ſuffer for it, if we do not. When we behave according to our Duty, there ſprings up a delightful Peace and Security within our Breaſts: when we knowingly tranſgreſs it, we not only diſapprove and accuſe ourſelves, whether we will or not, but experience a foreboding Expectation of juſt Recompence. *For Wickedneſs, condemned by her own Witneſs, is very timorous: and, being preſſed with Conſcience, always forecaſteth grievous Things*[b]. Nor do theſe Horrors relate only, or chiefly, to what we have deſerved to ſuffer in this World: but when our Share in it draws to an End, and Death approaches, then our Fears grow ſtronger than ever, concerning ſomewhat, which is yet to come[c]. And thus are all Men *a Law unto themſelves; and ſhew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conſcience alſo bearing Witneſs*[d].

[b] Wiſd. xvii. 11.

[c] Επειδαν τις εγγυς η τȣ οιεσθαι τελευτησειν, εισερχεται αυτω φοβος ϗ φροντις περι ὧν εν τω προσθεν ȣκ εισηει. Plat. de Rep. l. i.

[d] Rom. ii. 15.

That

That ſome Perſons are able to overwhelm theſe Apprehenſions under Buſineſs and Purſuits, to drown them in Debauchery and Intemperance, to divert them by Pleaſures and Amuſements, to ſet up little Cavils againſt them, and even affect to ridicule them; is no Objection in the leaſt to their being juſt, and well grounded. The Feeling is plainly natural: every one of theſe Methods to get rid of it, is plainly a Force upon Nature. Often it returns with double Terror, for having been unjuſtly driven away: and ſeldom, or never, can the moſt thoughtleſs, or moſt hardened Perſon, loſe intirely thoſe Fears, which are ſeated in the very Bottom of our Souls; and which if we could loſe, we ſhould only be the more ſurely miſerable: for ſtill the Foundation of them would remain unſhaken.

Still it would be true, that there is a God, who made us, and is at all Times intimately preſent with us: who therefore with unſpeakably more Eaſe perceives all that paſſes in our very Hearts, than we do one another's outward Actions: who being perfect in Knowledge, diſtinguiſhes, in every Caſe,

what is good from what is evil; and being perfect in Holiness, approves the one, and abhors the other. Even we are thus affected in some Degree: and his infinite Purity must therefore be infinitely more so. Now what he hates, he can punish as he pleases; and reward what he loves: for all Power is in his Hands; all Nature depends on the Word of his Mouth; and he is *the same Yesterday, To-day, and for ever* [c].

Think then: will the righteous and holy King of the whole Earth, when he hath planted his Laws in our Hearts, when he hath made us for the very Purpose of obeying them, when he hath filled us with so deep a Sense of what will follow, if we disobey them; suffer us, after this, to despise and dishonour him, to injure his Creatures, abuse ourselves, and disappoint the great Design of forming us; and yet take no Notice? Doth he govern the World, to the very least Parts of it, with so much Wisdom and Care, in every other Respect; and will he be so unwise and negligent, as to overlook the one Thing, that deserves his Attention above all; and make no Distinction

[c] Heb. xiii. 8.

between

between him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not[f]*?* It cannot be: and the Conſcience of every one of you, at this Moment, tells you it cannot.

If then ſuch a Diſtinction will be made, when and where will it be made? Here, in this World, it plainly is not done, to a Degree, that the almighty Governor of it can poſſibly think ſufficient. Perpetually we ſee *juſt Men, to whom it happeneth according to the Work of the wicked: and wicked Men, to whom it happeneth according to the Work of the righteous*[g]. Amidſt all this Diſorder, there are indeed evident Marks of a Providence: but of a Providence, that gives only Specimens and Earneſts of its Juſtice at preſent; reſerving the full Vindication and Diſplay of itſelf for that future State, in which our Souls, being naturally immortal, are evidently deſtined to exiſt; and where all Men ſhall receive according to their Works. This is the great End, that God had in his View, when he created us: and it is the principal Point, that we ſhould have in our own View, through the whole of our Lives.

[f] Mal. iii. 18. [g] Eccl. viii. 14.

More or leſs all Mankind, even in their darkeſt Ignorance, have always had ſome Perſuaſion of a future Recompence: which, however mixed with Errors, yet, being thus univerſal and laſting, muſt have been grounded in Nature and Truth. And the wiſer and better any Perſons were, amongſt the Heathens, the ſtronger and more rational Belief they had of this Doctrine: which yet was not owing merely to their Wiſhes, and their Hopes: for the worſt of Sinners, that were the fartheſt from deſiring a juſt Reward hereafter, feared it, whether they would or not. Thus we find it recorded of a very wicked Heathen, that when *Paul reaſoned of Righteouſneſs and Temperance, and Judgment to come, Felix trembled* [h].

But ſtill, while the Evidence of this great Article conſiſted wholly in mere human Reaſonings, about a Matter, that was out of Sight: bad Perſons, though they could not help at ſome Times believing enough to fright them; yet made a Shift at others to diſbelieve enough, to make them tolerably

[h] Acts xxiv. 25.

eaſy

eaſy in doing wrong: and good Perſons, though they might have Hope ſufficient to influence them in common Caſes; yet often had not ſufficient to ſupport them under harder Duties, and heavier Afflictions, than ordinary. Even the obſcurer Confirmations of this Doctrine in the Old Teſtament therefore were a great Benefit to thoſe, who partook of them: and as they had no Right to any ſuch Aſſurances of it; they had no Cauſe to complain, that they were not clearer. But we have infinite Cauſe to be thankful, who are favoured in the Goſpel with the fulleſt and ſtrongeſt Atteſtation to this moſt intereſting of all our Concerns. Chriſtians, unleſs they renounce their Chriſtianity, cannot diſbelieve a future Judgment. The only Difficulty is, to be influenced by our Belief, as we ought. And in that alſo the Scripture hath given us the beſt Help, which is poſſible to be given; by its affecting Accounts of the ſeveral Particulars, that relate to this awful Tranſaction: the Perſons on whom, the Perſon by whom, the Time when, the Things for which, and the Manner in which, the

final

final Sentence of Happineſs or Miſery is to be pronounced. Theſe Points therefore I ſhall now endeavour to place before you diſtinctly. And,

1. The Perſons, on whom, are, *the quick*, that is the living, *and the dead*. All that have died before, in every Age of the World, ſhall be reſtored to Life: and all that remain alive, ſhall be joined with them to receive their Doom; nor ſhall any Exception be made. For we are expreſsly aſſured, that *the dead, ſmall and great, ſhall ſtand before God*[1]. The very higheſt therefore ſhall not eſcape by their Power, the richeſt by their Wealth, the wiſeſt by their Abilities or Artfulneſs: nor, on the other Hand, ſhall the meaneſt Wretch be looked on, as too inconſiderable for God's Notice; or the moſt ignorant be exempted from anſwering for the Care, which he hath taken, to get the Knowledge, that he might, and to uſe the Knowledge, that he had, of his Duty. Whatever our Station be, we are bound alike to behave in it, as well as we can:

[1] Rev. xx. 12.

and

and how far we have done ſo, and how far we have failed of it, is the one Inquiry, that our Judge will make. Other Diſtinctions, how conſiderable ſoever they appear in our Eyes, to him are as nothing. All Creatures are equally beneath his infinite Majeſty; but none are either beneath or above his Inſpection now, or his Sentence hereafter. Here then we are put, every one of us, on a fair Trial, without any Diſadvantage or Inequality whatever. Both the moſt honourable, and the moſt contemptible Perſons, as to worldly Circumſtances, may be either the happieſt or the moſt miſerable in the next Life, juſt as they ſhall chuſe. Let thoſe of high Degree therefore be humble, thoſe of low be content, and all be watchful over themſelves.

2. The Perſon, by whom the Sentence ſhall be paſſed, is Jeſus Chriſt. *For the Father* himſelf *judgeth no Man: but hath committed all Judgment to the Son, and given him Authority to execute it, becauſe he is the Son of Man*[k]: becauſe he is the Perſon, deſcribed by that Name in the Prophet *Daniel*, before whom *the Judgment was* to

[k] John v. 22, 27.

be

be *ſet, and the Books opened*[l]: who alſo is no leſs peculiarly qualified, than expreſsly appointed for it; ſince in him divine Perfection is joined with Experience of human Infirmity. So that being judged by one, who *was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without Sin*[m]; we may be ſure, that every due Allowance will be made to our natural Weakneſs, and no undue one to our wilful Wickedneſs. Unleſs therefore we repent and amend, he, that came the firſt Time to ſave us, will come the ſecond to condemn us; and the meek and merciful Jeſus appear cloathed with ſuch Terror, that we ſhall *ſay to the Mountains and the Rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that ſitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb: for the great Day of his Wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand*[n]?

3. The Time, when theſe things ſhall be, himſelf informs us, *it is not for us to know*; being[o] known to the Father alone, and *put in his own Power*[o]. But ſtill, what

[l] Dan. vii. 10, 13. [m] Heb. iv. 15. [n] Rev. vi. 16, 17. [o] Acts. i. 7.

there is need we ſhould be told concerning it, the Scripture hath revealed: that it ſhall come unexpectedly, and that it ſhall come ſoon. The general Judgment may come, when we leaſt think of it. But however diſtant it may poſſibly be in itſelf, yet to every one of us it is undoubtedly in effect very near, and even at the Door. For *it is appointed unto Men once to die, and after this the Judgment*[p]. A few Years, it may be a few Days, will bring us to our End here: and in whatever State Death finds us, in the ſame will the laſt Judgment find us alſo. *For there is no Device, nor Wiſdom in the Grave*[q]: but *where the Tree falleth there ſhall it be*[r]. *Take Heed* therefore *to yourſelves, leſt your Hearts be overcharged,* either with the Pleaſures and Amuſements, or the *Cares* and Labours *of this Life; and ſo that Day come upon you unawares: for as a Snare ſhall it come on all them, that dwell on the whole Earth*[s]. *The evil Servant that ſhall ſay in his Heart, my Lord delayeth his coming; and ſhall begin to ſmite his Fellow-*

[p] Heb. ix. 27. [q] Eccl. ix. 10. [r] Eccl. xi. 3.
[s] Luke xxi. 34, 35.

ſervants,

ſervants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: the Lord of that Servant ſhall come in a Day, that he looketh not for him; and in an Hour, that he is not aware of; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth [t]. *Watch ye therefore, and be ready: bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing* [u].

4. The Things, for which we ſhall be judged, are, all our voluntary Deeds, Words and Thoughts. *For we muſt appear before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body* [w]. Now what we ſay, and what we think deſignedly, is as truly Part of our Doings, as what we act. Our Diſcourſe may be of as much Service or Harm to others; and even our inward Imaginations may as much prove us to be good or bad in ourſelves, and contribute to make us yet better or worſe. Often indeed we cannot help wicked Fancies coming into our Minds; and that alone will never be imputed to us as a Sin. But we can help inviting, indulging, and de-

[t] Matt. xxiv. 48—51. [u] Ibid. 42, 44, 46.
[w] 2 Cor. v. 10.

lighting

lighting in them: and if we do not, it is juſt, that we ſhould account for our Fault. And on the other Hand, it is fit and reaſonable, that every good Perſon ſhould be rewarded, not only for the religious and worthy Actions that he hath performed; but for every good Word, that hath proceeded from his good Heart; for his pious and virtuous Purpoſes and Affections. For God ſees the one, juſt as clearly, as the other: *there is no Creature, that is not manifeſt in his Sight; but all Things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him, with whom we have to do*[x]. And certainly what he ſees, and ſees to be proper for his Notice, he will not fail to take ſuitable Notice of it. The Scripture therefore aſſures us, with the utmoſt Reaſon; not only, that *by our Words we ſhall be juſtified, and by our Words condemned*; giving Account for the very *idleſt* and ſlighteſt of them, either with Grief or Joy, according as its Tendency was right or wrong[y]: but alſo, that *God ſhall judge the Secrets of Men by Jeſus Chriſt*[z]: *that there is nothing cover-*

[x] Heb. iv. 13. [y] Matt. xii. 36, 37. [z] Rom. ii. 16.

ed, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known[a]. *For God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing; whether it be good, or whether it be evil*[b].

Therefore, with respect to other Persons, let us be charitable, and *judge nothing* needlessly *before the Time; until the Lord come, who will bring to Light the hidden Things of Darkness, and make manifest the Counsels of all Hearts*[c]. And, with respect to ourselves, let us be easy under human Censures, if we have given no Occasion for them; for in that Case, *it is a small Thing to be judged of Man's Judgment*[d]: But let us carefully prepare for the divine Sentence, by *perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God*[e]; and after all our Care, let us be throughly humble: for though *we know nothing by ourselves, yet are we not hereby justified*, if it be through Partiality or Forgetfulness, as possibly it may; *but he that judgeth us, is the Lord*[f].

5. As to the Manner of the Judgment, it will be with the greatest Solemnity and Aw-

[a] Matt. x. 26. [b] Eccl. xii. 14. [c] 1 Cor. iv. 5.
[d] Ibid. 3. [e] 2 Cor. vii. 1. [f] 1 Cor. iv. 4.

fulness,

fulneſs, and with the greateſt Juſtice and Equity. *The Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from Heaven*[g], *with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire*[h]; and *the Trumpet ſhall ſound*[i], and *all that are in the Graves ſhall hear his Voice, and come forth*[k]. *Then ſhall he ſit upon the Throne of his Glory*[l], *and the Books ſhall be opened,* and *they ſhall be judged out of thoſe Things, which are written in the Books, according to their Works*[m]. As *many as have ſinned without* a revealed *Law, ſhall periſh without* a revealed *Law: and as many as have ſinned in the Law,* whether Jewiſh or Chriſtian, *ſhall be judged by the Law*[n]. *Unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall much be required: and to whom much is committed, of him will the more be aſked*[o]. He *that hath ſowed ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ſparingly: and he which hath ſowed bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully*[p]. *Whatſoever a Man hath ſowed, that ſhall he alſo reap*[q].

What Manner of Perſons ought we to be

[g] 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. [h] 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8. [i] 1 Cor. xv, 52. [k] John v. 28, 29. [l] Matt. xxv. 31. [m] Rev. xx, 12. [n] Rom. ii. 12. [o] Luke xii. 48. [p] 2 Cor. ix. 6. [q] Gal. vi. 7.

then *in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs: looking for and haſtening unto the coming of the Day of God; wherein the Heavens, being on Fire, ſhall be diſſolved, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent Heat? Nevertheleſs we, according to his Promiſe, look for new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs. Wherefore, beloved, ſeeing that ye look for ſuch Things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in Peace, without Spot, and blameleſs: grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt: to him be Glory, both now and for ever. Amen*[1].

[1] 2 Peter iii. 11—14, 18.

LECTURE XIII.

CREED.

Article VIII. *I believe in the Holy Ghoſt.*

THE former Articles having expreſſed the Belief of Chriſtians concerning the two firſt Perſons of the ſacred Trinity, the Father and the Son; our Creed proceeds in this to the third Object of our baptiſmal Faith, the Holy Ghoſt. And to explain it properly, there will be Need to ſpeak, firſt, of his Nature: ſecondly, of his peculiar Office in the Work of our Redemption: thirdly, of the Duties owing to him: fourthly, of the Sins, which we are liable to commit againſt him.

I. Of the Nature of the Holy Ghoſt, or Spirit. For *Ghoſt*, in the ancient Uſe of our Language, denoted the ſame Thing,

which Spirit doth now: a Subſtance different from Body or Matter. Indeed we ſtill uſe it, in expreſſing the Departure of the Spirit from the Body, which we call *giving up the Ghoſt*; and in ſpeaking of ſuppoſed Apparitions of the Spirits of Perſons after their Deceaſe. Hence alſo the Catechiſm mentions *ghoſtly Dangers*; and the Communion Service, *ghoſtly Counſels*: meaning ſuch Dangers, and ſuch Counſels, as relate to our ſpiritual Part.

In like Manner, the Holy Ghoſt is the Holy Spirit: concerning whoſe Nature, we can know, as I told you before concerning that of the Son, only what reſults from the Diſcoveries made to us in Scripture. And theſe, though they enlighten us but in Part, are both credible and ſufficient. For it is no Objection againſt believing what God hath revealed in Relation to any Subject, that many Queſtions may be aſked about what he hath not revealed, to which we can give no Anſwer. And he will never expect us, in this or any Matter, to apprehend more, than he hath afforded us the Means of apprehending.

prehending. Now the chief Things, revealed in the preſent Caſe, are the following.

The Holy Ghoſt is not merely an Attribute or Power of the Father, but hath a real Subſiſtence, diſtinct both from the Father and the Son. For the New Teſtament expreſsly and repeatedly uſes the Word, *he*, concerning him[a]: which is never uſed in that Manner of a mere Attribute or Power. It aſcribes to him Will and Underſtanding[b]: it ſpeaks of him as being ſent by the Father, coming and acting on various Occaſions, relative both to the Son and to others; nay, as ſhewing *himſelf in a bodily Shape, like a Dove*[c].

Further: The Holy Ghoſt is, truly and ſtrictly ſpeaking, God. For the Language of Scripture concerning him is ſuch, as cannot belong to any created Being. He is there called, *the eternal Spirit*[d], *the Lord*[e]: ſaid to *quicken*, or *give Life*[f]; to be every where preſent with all good Chriſtians[g]; to *ſearch all Things, yea, the deep Things of God, even as the Things of a Man are known by his own Spirit, which is in him*[h]. Chriſt, being con-

[a] John xiv. 26. xv. 26. xvi. 13. Heb. ii. 4. Comp. 1 Cor. xii. 11.
[b] Rom. viii. 27.
[c] Luke iii. 22.
[d] Heb. ix. 14.
[e] 2 Cor. iii. 17.
[f] 1 Pet. iii. 18.
[g] John xiv. 16, 17.
[h] 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

ceived by him, became *the Son of God*[l]. Chriſtians, by his dwelling in them, become *the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt*[k], or, as another Place expreſſes it, *the Temples of God*[l]. *Ananias*, by lying to him, *lyed not unto Men, but unto God*[m]. He is ſaid to diſtribute ſpiritual and miraculous Gifts, *dividing to every Man ſeverally, as he will*[n]. *And as the Diſciples miniſtered to the Lord and faſted, the Holy Ghoſt ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the Work, whereunto I have called them*[o]. He is repreſented by our Saviour, as able fully to ſupply the Want of his perſonal Preſence with the Apoſtles[p]. And laſtly he is joined with the Father and the Son, on equal Terms, both in the Form of Baptiſm, where his Name and theirs are uſed alike[q]; and in the ſolemn Form of Bleſſing; where *the Fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt* is placed on a Level with *the Love of God, and the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*[r].

Theſe, and many other Scripture Expreſſions, are ſurely ſuch, as cannot be uſed of any Creature: but prove the Spirit, as others,

[l] Luke i. 35. [k] 1 Cor. vi. 19. [l] 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.
[m] Acts v. 3, 4. [n] 1 Cor. xii. 11. [o] Acts xiii. 2.
[p] John xvi. 7. [q] Matth. xxviii. 19. [r] 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

already

already mentioned to you, prove the Son, to partake of the ſame Authority and Perfections, and therefore the ſame Nature, with the Father. Yet we know, that though in holy Writ Men and Angels are, ſometimes on account of their extenſive Power, ſometimes as Repreſentatives of the Deity, called Gods, yet in literal Propriety of Speech there is but one God, and not either three ſupreme Beings, or a ſuperior and an inferior Object of Adoration. *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord*[s]. *Is there a God beſides me? yea, there is no God: I know not any*[t]. *Before me was no God formed: neither ſhall there be after me*[u]. *I am the Lord,——and my Glory will I not give to another*[w]. *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve*[x]. Since then there is not a Plurality of Gods; and yet the Son and the Spirit are each of them God, no leſs than the Father: it plainly follows, that they are, in a Manner by us inconceivable, ſo united to him, that *theſe three are one*[y]; but ſtill, in a Manner equally inconceivable, ſo diſtinguiſhed from him, that no one of them is the other.

[s] Deut. vi. 4. [t] Iſa. xliv. 8. [u] Iſa. xliii. 10.
[w] Iſa. xlii. 8. [x] Matth. iv. 10. [y] 1 John v. 7.

Now certainly, in general, it is no Contradiction, that Things ſhould be in one Reſpect the ſame, and in another different. But the particular and explicit Notion of this Union and this Diſtinction the Word of God hath not given us. Whether we are capable of apprehending it, we know not: and therefore it is no Wonder in the leaſt, that we are incapable of forming one to ourſelves. For indeed we are incapable of forming clear Notions concerning thouſands of other Things, which are unſpeakably leſs beyond our Reach. All that we can do therefore is, to uſe thoſe Expreſſions in Relation to it, which either Scripture furniſhes, or Experience hath found uſeful to guard againſt falſe Apprehenſions: for with very imperfect ones we muſt be content. Thus in ſpeaking of the Difference of the Son and Spirit from the Father and from each other, we ſay, with our Bible, that the Son *is begotten*, and the Spirit *proceeds*, without pretending to know any further, what theſe two Words mean, than that each denotes ſomething different from the other; and both ſomething different from Creation out of Nothing.

Nothing. And this Diſtinction giving Occaſion to Scripture to ſpeak of them in ſomewhat the ſame Manner, as of different Perſons amongſt Men: we call them the three Perſons of the Trinity: not at all intending by it to ſay, that the Word, *Perſon*, ſuits them in every Reſpect that it ſuits us: but only to acknowledge, that as we find them thus ſpoken of, we doubt not but there is ſome ſufficient Ground for it. And as we find further, that in Point of Rank, the Perſon of the Father is repreſented as ſupreme, the Son as ſubordinate to him, the Holy Spirit to both; and in Point of Relation to us, Creation is aſcribed peculiarly to the firſt, Redemption to the ſecond, Sanctification to the third; and yet, in ſome Senſe, each of theſe Things to each: we imitate the Whole of this likewiſe. Still we are very ſenſible at the ſame Time, that many more Doubts and Difficulties may be raiſed, almoſt about every Part of the Doctrine, than God, in his unſearchable Wiſdom, hath given us Light enough to ſolve. But we apprehend it is our Duty, to believe with Humility and Simplicity what the Scripture hath taught us;

and to be contentedly ignorant of what it doth not teach us; without indulging Speculations and Conjectures, which will only perplex the Subject more, instead of clearing it. And surely it is our Duty also, to interpret with Candour, and use with prudent Moderation whatever well-meant Phrases the Church of Christ, especially in its earlier Days, hath applied to this Subject; to think, on Matters, which are both so mysterious in their Nature, and so hard to be expressed, with great Charity of other Persons: and for ourselves, to keep close with great Care to so much as is plain and practical. In order to this, I now proceed to lay before you,

II. The peculiar Office of the Spirit in the Work of our Redemption: on Account of which he is called, in our Catechism, *God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth us, and all the elect People of God.* For probably he is called the Holy Spirit so frequently in Scripture, and *the Spirit of Holiness* once [z], not merely as being perfectly holy in himself, which the Father and the Son are also, but

[z] Rom. i. 4.

as

as being the Cauſe of Holineſs in Believers; who are elected by God, to eternal Life, on foreſeeing that their Faith will produce Obedience.

To be holy is to be pure from Defilement; but particularly, in this Caſe, from the Defilement of Iniquity: and being ſanctified is being made holy: to which bleſſed Change in ſinful Man, the Spirit of God, we are taught, contributes many Ways.

In Baptiſm we are *born again of Water and of the Spirit*[a]; reſtored by him to the State of God's Children, and endued with the Principles of a new, that is the Chriſtian, Life. As we grow up, it is through him, that our Underſtandings are enlightened by the Knowledge of God's Will. He directed the ancient Prophets in what they preached and wrote. For *holy Men of old Time ſpake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*[b]: which more eſpecially *teſtified beforehand the Sufferings of Chriſt, and the Glories that ſhould follow*[c]. Then afterwards, when our Saviour became Man, the Holy Ghoſt was upon him, and accompanied him through the Whole of his

[a] John iii. 3, 5. [b] 2 Pet. i. 21. [c] 1 Pet. i. 11.

Miniſtra-

Miniſtration[d]: and after his Aſcenſion was communicated more fully than before to his Apoſtles; to *teach them all Things* needful, *and bring to their Remembrance whatever he had ſaid to them*[e]: ſo that in all their Diſcourſes for the Inſtruction of Mankind, *it was not* ſo much *they who ſpoke*, as *the Spirit of the Father, that ſpoke in them*[f]. Nor can we doubt, but he afforded them equal Aſſiſtance at leaſt in what they wrote for the Uſe of all future Ages. The ſame Spirit was alſo their Comforter under every Suffering: and laſtly bore Witneſs to the Truth of their Doctrine and our Faith, by a Multitude of *Signs and Wonders and* ſupernatural *Gifts*[g]: by which Means, and the Miniſtry of their Succeſſors, whom likewiſe *the Holy Ghoſt made Overſeers over Chriſt's Flock*[h], the Light of his Goſpel hath filled the World, and now ſhines upon us.

Nor is it outwardly alone, that he reveals and confirms to us divine Truths: but as the bleſſed *Jeſus* promiſed, that *he ſhould*

[d] Matth. iii. 16. Luke iii. 22. iv. 1. Acts i. 2. x. 38.
[e] John xiv. 26. [f] Matth. x. 20. [g] Heb. ii. 4.
[h] Acts xx. 28.

dwell

dwell in his Diſciples, and *abide with them for ever*[l]; ſo, by his inward Operations, the Credibility of which I ſhall, God willing, prove to you in its proper Place, he *opens our Hearts*[k] to receive the Word of God, influences our Affections to delight in it, and excites our Wills to act conformably to it: for which Reaſons good Perſons are ſaid to *be led by the Spirit*[l]; and all Chriſtian Graces to be *the Fruits of the Spirit*[m]. With the Wicked *he ſtrives*[n], till they obſtinately harden themſelves, and then forſakes them. But thoſe, who yield to his Motions, he *renews*[o], and *ſtrengthens with Might in the inner Man*[p]; *helps their Infirmities*, and both directs and animates their Prayers, thus *making*, as it were, *Interceſſion*[q] within them. By this *one Spirit*, being in all Chriſtians, they are united into *one Body*[r], and made to love each other. *By the Holy Ghoſt* alſo, *the Love of God is ſhed abroad in our Hearts*[s], teaching us to look upon him, not as an auſtere Maſter, but a kind Parent; or, in

[l] John xiv. 16. [k] Acts xvi. 14. [l] Rom. viii. 14. [m] Gal. v. 22. [n] Gen. vi. 3. [o] Tit. iii. 5. [p] Eph. iii. 16. [q] Rom. viii. 26, 27. [r] Eph. iv. 4. [s] Rom. v. 5.

the

the Language of St. *Paul*, to cry, *Abba, Father*[t]. And thus *the Spirit beareth Witneſs with our Spirit*, joins with our Conſciences to complete the Evidence, *that we are the Sons of God*[u]: from whence ariſes that *Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*[w], which different Perſons have in very different Degrees: and therefore no one ſhould deſpond, becauſe he feels but little, or at Times perhaps nothing, of it, provided he truly honours and ſerves God. But to ſome Perſons, on ſome Occaſions, the heavenly Comforter vouchſafes, both ſtrong Aſſurances of their good State; *(hereby know we, that God abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us*[x]*;)* and ſuch lively Conſolations from it, as amount to a Pledge and Foretaſte of Happineſs to come. Accordingly they are ſaid to be *ſealed with the Holy Spirit of Promiſe, which is the Earneſt of their Inheritance*[y].

But to prevent wicked Perſons of enthuſiaſtic Tempers from miſtaking, as they often have done, their own groundleſs Con-

[t] Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6. [u] Rom. viii. 16. [w] Rom. xiv. 17. [x] 1 John iii. 24. [y] Eph. i. 13, 14.

fidence

fidence for the inward Teſtimony of the divine Spirit, they ſhould be carefully reminded, that *by our Fruits we are known*[a], and muſt know ourſelves[a]; that *the Fruit of the Spirit is in all Righteouſneſs and Truth*[b], and only *good Men are full of the Holy Ghoſt*[c]. *For into a malicious Soul he will not enter; nor dwell in the Body, that is ſubject unto Sin. The Holy Spirit of Diſcipline will flee Deceit; and remove from Thoughts, that are without Underſtanding; and will not abide, when Unrighteouſneſs cometh in*[d].

III. The next Thing propoſed was to ſpeak of the Duties owing to the Holy Ghoſt: which, beſides the general one of honouring him ſuitably to his Nature, as God, are in particular, to be baptized in his Name, as I have already mentioned; to pray for his Graces; for God *giveth Grace unto the humble*[e], and *will give his Holy Spirit to them that aſk him*[f]; to be heartily thankful for all his good Motions, and conſcientiouſly to obey them in every Inſtance. By this laſt I

[a] Matth. vii. 16. [a] 1 John ii. 3. [b] Eph. v. 9.
[c] Acts xi. 24. [d] Wiſd. i. 4, 5. [e] James iv. 6.
[f] Luke xi. 13.

do not mean, that we ſhould *believe every Spirit* [g]; follow every ſtrong Imagination of our own, or Pretence of Light from above in others: but adhere ſteadily to that Rule of Life, which the Holy Ghoſt hath directed the Writers of Scripture to teach us, and inwardly prompts and diſpoſes us to obſerve. For other Inſpiration, than this, being now become unneceſſary; we have no Reaſon to expect, but much Reaſon to diſtruſt it. But eſpecially, if we be urged, under Colour of ſuch Authority, to break any one ſtanding Precept of the Goſpel, or add to, or take away from, any ſingle Article of our Creed; *though an Angel from Heaven* [h] were to require it, we are not to yield; but keep cloſe to *the Faith and holy Commandment, which were once delivered to the Saints* [i], and ſhall never be altered.

Theſe then are our Duties to the ever-bleſſed Spirit. There are likewiſe mentioned in Scripture,

IV. Sins againſt him. And one of theſe, not all, as melancholy Perſons are apt to

[g] 1 John iv. 1. [h] Gal. i. 8. [i] 2 Pet. ii. 21. Jude, verſe 3.

imagine,

imagine, but one alone, is ſaid by our Saviour to be unpardonable: which is *Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt*[k]. Now that means only, ſpeaking reproachful Words, deliberately and maliciouſly, againſt the Miracles done by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, or the ſupernatural Gifts proceeding from him. And the only Perſons, to whom Chriſt declared, that this ſhould not be forgiven, were thoſe, who had the Teſtimony of their own Senſes for the Reality of theſe Miracles and Gifts; and notwithſtanding the fulleſt Evidence of their coming from the Spirit of God, obſtinately perſiſted in reviling them, and even aſcribed them to the Devil. Now there is a plain Reaſon, why this Sin, under theſe Circumſtances, muſt be unpardonable. The Perſons, guilty of it, had ſtood out againſt all the Means, which Heaven had provided for the Conviction and Converſion of Mankind: none more powerful remained to bring them to Repentance; and, as they could not be forgiven without repenting, there was plainly no Way left for their Recovery.

[k] Matth. xii. 31. Mark iii. 28, 29. Luke xii. 10.

But then it is equally plain, that Perſons, who never were Witneſſes to any ſuch miraculous Powers; but live, as we do, many Ages after they are ceaſed; cannot, in this Reſpect, ſin to the ſame Degree of Guilt, ſince it is not againſt the ſame Degree of Evidence: and that as they, who were guilty of it originally, were Unbelievers in Chriſt, ſo indeed no Believer in him, continuing ſuch, can poſſibly deſign, whilſt his Thoughts and Words are in his own Command, to ſpeak Evil of the Holy Ghoſt or his mighty Works. Nor therefore can he come under the Condemnation of thoſe, whom the Epiſtle to the Hebrews deſcribes, as *wilfully doing Deſpite to the Spirit of Grace*; and of whom it pronounces, that *there remains for them no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a fearful Expectation of Judgment*[1]. Believers may indeed raſhly and thoughtleſsly uſe profane Words concerning the Holy Ghoſt: but theſe, though undoubtedly great Offences, and too likely to make Way for greater ſtill, are very far from the unpardonable Sin. And as for what ſome good Perſons are often ter-

[1] Heb. x. 26—29.

rified

rified about, the wicked Imaginations that come into their Minds, and Expreſſions that come out of their Mouths, at Times, almoſt whether they will or not; in Proportion as they are involuntary, they are not criminal in them, be they in their own Nature ever ſo bad. When therefore poor ſcrupulous Souls affright themſelves about ſuch Things, as theſe; or when they who have not ſinned at all againſt the Spirit, otherwiſe than as every ill Action is a Sin againſt him; or have ſinned in a quite different Manner from the Jews in the Goſpel, and heartily repented of their Sin; when they apprehend, that notwithſtanding this they cannot be pardoned; they intirely miſtake their own Caſe: either through Ignorance, or falſe Opinions infuſed into them; or exceſſive Tenderneſs of Mind; or indeed more commonly by Reaſon of ſome bodily Diſorder, though perhaps unperceived by themſelves, which depreſſes their Spirits, and clouds their Underſtandings, and requires the Help of Medicine.

Another Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, mentioned in Scripture, is *lying to him*[m]: which

[m] Acts v. 3.

means there, asserting Falshoods, being conscious that they were such, to Persons inspired by him with the Knowledge of Mens Hearts, as did *Ananias* and *Sapphira*. But the Offences, which we are in Danger of committing against him, are *resisting*[n] and *quenching*[o] his good Motions and Influences, and *grieving him*[p] by *corrupt Communication*, evil Thoughts or unholy Actions. These Things therefore let us diligently avoid; or, if we have fallen into them, sincerely repent of them: the opposite Duties let us conscientiously practise, and stedfastly persevere in them: for so shall we *commend ourselves to God, and to the Spirit of his Grace; who is able to build us up, and give us an Inheritance amongst them who are sanctified*[q]; to which he of his Mercy bring us all, for the Sake of our Redeemer Jesus Christ. Amen.

[n] Acts vii. 51. [o] 1 Thess. v. 19 [p] Eph. iv. 29, 30. [q] Acts xx. 32.

LEC-

LECTURE XIV.

CREED.

Article IX. *The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints.*

THE moſt ancient Creeds of all went no further than a Declaration of Faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, in whoſe Name we are baptized. For in this Profeſſion all thoſe other Points of Doctrine were underſtood to be implied, which it was very ſoon after found moſt convenient to expreſs by additional Articles. And the firſt of theſe, is that now to be explained: wherein we declare our Belief in *the Holy Catholic Church*, and *the Communion of Saints.*

The Scripture Word, tranſlated, *Church*, originally ſignifies any regular and orderly Aſſembly of Perſons, called to meet on any

Occaſion. But in the Bible it ſignifies, almoſt always, a religious Aſſembly. And when uſed in its largeſt Senſe there, it comprehends the whole Number of good Perſons, in every Age: all thoſe, who from the Beginning of the World, under whatever Diſpenſation of true Religion, have believed in God, and ſerved him, according to the Degree of their Light; and ſhall in the End of it be gathered together, and rewarded by him, according to the Degree of their Improvement. This is *the general Aſſembly and Church of the firſt-born, which are written in Heaven*, as the Epiſtle to the Hebrews calls it[a]. And ſince the Salvation of all theſe is owing to Jeſus Chriſt; the only Name, by which Men can be ſaved[b], they are all, in that Reſpect, Members of the Church of Chriſt, how obſcure and imperfect ſoever their Knowledge of a Saviour may have been. But the Word is uſually taken in a narrower Senſe. And thus it is ſometimes applied to the Jewiſh Nation: which in the Old Teſtament is called by a Phraſe of juſt the ſame Meaning,

[a] Heb. xii. 23. [b] Acts iv. 12.

the

the Congregation of the Lord[c], and by St. *Stephen, the Church, which was in the Wilderneſs*[d]. But the Church, more eſpecially meant here in the Creed, is the Chriſtian: which, though in ſome Reſpects the ſame with the Jewiſh, in others differed from it; which therefore our Saviour, in the Goſpel, ſpeaks of himſelf, as about to *build*[e]; and accordingly, immediately after his Aſcenſion, in the Acts of the Apoſtles, we find it built: that is, we find an Aſſembly of Believers in Chriſt, met together at *Jeruſalem*, under their proper Teachers and Governors, to worſhip God, and edify one another, in the Manner, which he appointed.

This was the original Chriſtian Church; ſmall indeed at firſt: but *the Lord*, we read, *added to the Church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved*[f]; till, the Goſpel ſpreading every Way, the Number of Chriſtians, which in the Beginning required no more than one Congregation, was of Neceſſity divided into ſeveral. And henceforward we find many Churches ſpoken of, at ſome Times: yet all theſe many ſpoken of as one, at others.

[c] Numb. xvi. 3, &c. [d] Acts vii. 38. [e] Matth. xvi. 18. [f] Acts ii. 47.

For since they all proceeded from the same Source; are all, as the Apostle argues, *one Body*; and are directed by *one Spirit*; *even as they are called in one Hope of their Calling*; as they have *one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all*[g]: so are they, in great Propriety of Speech, though *many*, yet *one in Christ*[h]. His Church therefore is the whole Number of those, who believe on him. How much soever they may differ in some Opinions or Practices, yet they are one in all Things essential. How wide soever they may be dispersed throughout the World, they shall at last be *gathered together unto him*[i]. We can judge only according to Appearances: and therefore to us all those must be Members of Christ's Church, who make a visible Profession of being Christians. But God sees every secret Thought: and in his Eye, they alone belong truly to his Church, who truly serve him in *the hidden Man of the Heart*[k]: that inward Sincerity, which to human Eyes is invisible. And this invisible true Church of Christ

[g] Eph. iv. 4. 5. [h] Rom. xii. 5. [i] 2 Thess. ii. 1.
[k] 1 Peter iii. 4.

here

here in Earth is militant; carrying on a continual War, againſt the outward Temptations of the World and the Devil, and the inward Struggles of every wrong Inclination: till having faithfully *fought the good Fight*; and really, though not perfectly, *gotten the Victory* in this Life; it ſhall, in the next, become triumphant, and receive the *Crown of Righteouſneſs*[1].

Such then being the Church of Chriſt in its different States: let us proceed to conſider the two Qualities, aſcribed to it in the Creed: that it is *Holy*, and that it is *Catholic*.

To be holy, is to be ſeparate from all Defilement and Impurity, particularly of the moral Kind. Thus God is perfectly holy: Angels and good Men are ſo in their different Degrees. And becauſe nothing unclean or impure, in any Senſe, ought to enter into the Service of God, therefore whatever is ſet apart from common Uſe, and dedicated to his Worſhip, is called holy alſo. Hence the Places, Times, and Things, that are ſo employed, have that Name given them.

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 7. Rev. xv. 2.

And

And the Perſons, who attend on his Miniſtry, are ſtiled holy on account of their outward Relation to him, whether they are really and inwardly ſuch as they ought, or not. Now in outward Profeſſion, the whole viſible Church of Chriſt is holy: ſeparated and diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the World, by acknowledging his holy Laws, and uſing the Means of Holineſs, which he hath appointed. But in the inward Senſe, and the only one which will avail hereafter, they alone are indeed Members of his holy Church, who, by the Help of theſe Means, do really improve themſelves in Piety and Virtue, becoming *holy in all Manner of Converſation*, as *he which hath called them, is holy*[m]: and ſuch as are truly ſo here, ſhall be made completely ſo hereafter. For *Chriſt loved the Church*, and *gave himſelf for it, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of Water; and preſent it to himſelf a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle; but that it ſhould be holy, and without Blemiſh*[n]. Aſk your Hearts then; Are you giving your beſt Dili-

[m] 1 Peter i. 15. [n] Epheſ. v. 25, 26, 27.

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gence to *cleanſe yourſelves from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God*[o]? *For without it no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*[p].

The Word *Catholic*, applied to the Church in our Creed, is no where uſed in Scripture; but frequently in the early Chriſtian Writers: and it means *univerſal*, extending to all Mankind. The Jewiſh Church was not univerſal, but particular: for it conſiſted only of one Nation; and their Law permitted Sacrifices only in one Temple; nor could ſeveral other Precepts of it be obſerved in Countries at any conſiderable Diſtance from thence; but the Chriſtian conſiſts *of every Kindred, Tongue and People*[q] equally; and *offers unto the Name of God in every Place, from the riſing of the Sun unto the going down of the ſame, Incenſe and a pure Offering*[r]. The Catholic Church then is the univerſal Church, ſpread through the World: and the Catholic Faith is the univerſal Faith; *that Form of Doctrine*, which the Apoſtles *delivered*[s] to the whole

[o] 2 Cor. vii. 1. [p] Heb. xii. 14. [q] Rev. v. 9.
[r] Mal. i. 11. [s] Rom. vi. 17.

Church,

Church, and it received. What this Faith was, we may learn from their Writings, contained in the New Teſtament: and at ſo great a diſtance of Time, we can learn it with Certainty no where elſe. Every Church or Society of Chriſtians, that preſerves this Catholic or univerſal Faith, accompanied with true Charity, is a Part of the Catholic or univerſal Church: and becauſe the Parts are of the ſame Nature with the whole, it hath been uſual to call every Church ſingly, which is ſo qualified, a Catholic Church. And in this Senſe, Churches, that differ widely in ſeveral Notions and Cuſtoms, may, notwithſtanding, each of them, be truly Catholic Churches. But the Church of *Rome*, which is one of the moſt corrupted Parts of the Catholic Church, both in Faith and Love, hath preſumed to call itſelf the whole Catholic Church, the univerſal Church: which it no more is, than one diſeaſed Limb, though perhaps the larger for being diſeaſed, is the whole Body of a Man. And by attempting to exclude us, they take the direct Way to exclude themſelves, unleſs God impute their uncharitable

Way

Way of thinking and acting, as we hope he will, to excuſable Ignorance and Miſtake. The Church of *England* pretends not indeed, abſurdly, to be the whole Catholic Church; but is undoubtedly a ſound and excellent Member of it. So that we have much better Ground to call ourſelves Catholics, than they; were ſuch Names worth diſputing about, which they are not: only one would not flatter and harden them, by giving them a Title, which they both claim unjuſtly, and turn into an Argument againſt us.

In this *holy Catholic Church* our Creed profeſſes *Belief*. But the Meaning is not, that we engage to believe all Things, without Exception, of which the Majority of the Church, at any Time, ſhall be perſuaded: and much leſs, what the Rulers of it, or, it may be, a ſmall Part of them, who may pleaſe to call themſelves the Church, ſhall at any time require: for then we muſt believe many plain Falſhoods, Uncertainties without Number, and contrary Doctrines, as contrary Parties prevail. Our Church doth indeed believe whatever the firſt and

beſt Ages of Chriſtianity thought neceſſary: whatever all the other Churches of the preſent Age agree in. But this is more, than we declare in the Creed. For there, as believing in God, means only believing that there is a God; and believing in the Reſurrection, means only believing that there ſhall be a Reſurrection: ſo believing in the holy Catholic Church, means only believing that by our Saviour's Appointment there was founded, and through his Mercy ſhall ever continue, a Society of Perſons, of what Nation or Nations is indifferent, who have Faith in his Name, and obey his Laws: not indeed without being deformed and disfigured, by Mixtures both of Sin and Error; but ſtill, without being deſtroyed by either. For as he hath promiſed, that *the Gates of Hell*, or of the inviſible World, that is, Perſecution and Death, *ſhall not prevail againſt his Church*[t], ſo neither ſhall any other Power. Nothing ſhall aboliſh it: though ſeveral Things may obſcure and corrupt it. That Sin doth, we ſee: why then may not Error too? It is certainly not a worſe Thing: nor

[t] Matth. xvi. 18.

is

is our Saviour's Promiſe a greater Security againſt the one, than the other. He requires us indeed to *hear the Church*. But in what Caſe? *If thy Brother treſpaſs againſt thee*, admoniſh him privately. This relates then, not to diſputed ſpeculative Opinions, but to known practical Tranſgreſſions againſt our Neighbour. *If he neglect* private Admonition, *tell it unto the Church*. Not ſurely the whole Catholic Church, all over the World: that is impoſſible: but the particular Church, to which you both belong. Now all Sides allow, that every particular Church is fallible; and therefore to be heard no farther, than it appears to be in the Right. It follows next: And *if he neglect to hear the Church*; if he will not reform his injurious Behaviour on a public Warning, *let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man and a Publican*[a]: treat him no longer with the Tenderneſs and Regard, that is due to a good Chriſtian; but conſider him in the ſame Light with an Infidel Sinner, till he makes Reparation. This Rule therefore by no Means proves the Infallibility, even of the univerſal Church,

[a] Matth. xviii. 15, 16, 17.

and much leſs of the *Romiſh*, which is far from univerſal; but relates to a Matter intirely different. And it ſtill remains true, that profeſſing to believe in the Holy Catholic Church, is only acknowledging, that Chriſt hath formed the whole Number of his Followers, under him their Head, into one regular and ſacred Body or Society, to laſt for ever: the Unity and Holineſs of which is to be carefully preſerved by what the latter Part of this Article ſpecifies,

The Communion of Saints. The Word, *Saints*, is of the ſame Meaning with the Word holy: and therefore comprehends all Chriſtians, in the manner which I have juſt explained. Having *Communion*, is being intitled to partake of Benefits and Kindneſſes, and bound to make ſuitable Returns for them. And thus Chriſtians, or Saints, have Communion or *Fellowſhip* with *the Father, from whom cometh down every good and perfect Gift: with his Son Jeſus Chriſt* [x], through whom Forgiveneſs and Mercy is conveyed to us: with the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe ſanctifying Graces are conferred on ſuch as duly qualify

[x] 1 John i. 3. Jam. i. 17.

their

their Hearts for the Reception of them. And for these Blessings we owe all Thankfulness, and all Duty, in Thought, Word, and Deed. Christians have also Communion with the holy Angels; as these *are ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be Heirs of Salvation*[y]. And undoubtedly we ought to think of what they do for us, with an inward Sense of Gratitude and Love. But as we are unacquainted with Particulars, we can make no particular Acknowledgments: nor ought we to make any general ones, by outward Expressions of Respect; since *worshipping God alone* is commanded[z], and *worshipping Angels* condemned[a], in Scripture.

With Respect to those of our own Nature, we are bound so far to hold Communion, even with the worst of Unbelievers, as not only to do them every Kind of Justice, but sincerely to wish, and, if Occasion offer, heartily endeavour their Good, both in Body and Soul. But to all, *who have obtained the like precious Faith with ourselves*[b], we bear a

[y] Heb. i. 14. [z] Matth. iv. 10.
[a] Col. ii. 18. [b] 2 Pet. i. 1.

ſtill nearer Relation; as being, in a peculiar Senſe, Children of the ſame Father, Diſciples of the ſame Maſter, animated by the ſame Spirit, Members of the ſame Body. And theſe Things oblige us to the utmoſt Care of preſerving, by prudent Order and mutual Forbearance, as much Unity in the Church, as poſſibly we can. Such indeed, as obſtinately deny the fundamental Doctrines, or tranſgreſs the fundamental Precepts of Chriſtianity, ought to be rejected from Chriſtian Communion. But to renounce communicating with any others, who are willing to admit us to it on lawful Terms, is the Way to cut off ourſelves, not them, from the Body of Chriſt: who yet, we doubt not, will allow thoſe on both Sides to belong to his Church, who, through pardonable Paſſions or Miſtakes, will not allow one another to do ſo.

And as we ſhould maintain Communion with all proper Perſons, we ſhould ſhew our Diſpoſition to it in all proper Ways: attend on the public Inſtruction, join in the public Worſhip, Sacraments and Diſcipline, which our Lord hath appointed; and keep the Whole of them pure from all forbidden,

or

or ſuſpicious Alterations or Mixtures: avoid, with great Care, both giving and taking needleſs Offence, in Reſpect to theſe, or any Matters; and, by all fit Means, *edify one another in Love*[c]: obeying thoſe, who are ſet over us; condeſcending to thoſe, who are beneath us; eſteeming and honouring the wiſe and virtuous; teaching and admoniſhing the ignorant and faulty; bearing with the weak, relieving the poor, and comforting the afflicted.

Nor have we Communion only with the Saints on Earth: but are of one City, and one Family, with ſuch, as are already got ſafe to Heaven. Doubtleſs they exerciſe that Communion towards us, by loving and praying for their Brethren, whom they have left behind them. And we are to exerciſe it towards them, not by addreſſing Petitions to them, which we are neither authoriſed to offer, nor have any Ground to think they can hear; but by rejoicing in their Happineſs, thanking God for the Grace which he hath beſtowed on them, and the Examples which they have left us: holding their Me-

[c] Rom. xiv. 19. Eph. iv. 16.

mories in Honour, imitating their Virtues, and beſeeching the Diſpoſer of all Things, that having followed them in Holineſs here, we may meet them in Happineſs hereafter; and become, in the fulleſt Senſe, *Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God* [d]: *having, with all thoſe that are departed in the true Faith of his holy Name, our perfect Conſummation and Bliſs, both in Body and Soul, in his eternal and everlaſting Glory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen* [e].

[d] Eph. ii. 19. [e] Burial Office.

LEC-

LECTURE XV.

CREED.

Article X. *The Forgiveneſs of Sins.*

WE are now come to that Article of the Creed, for which all the preceding ones have been preparing the Way: a Doctrine, of the greateſt Comfort to believe, and the utmoſt Danger to miſapprehend. I ſhall therefore endeavour clearly to explain,

I. The Nature of Sin, its different Kinds, and its Guilt.

II. The Nature and Conditions of the Forgiveneſs promiſed to it.

I. The Nature of Sin. Both Men and all other Beings, endued with ſufficient Reaſon, muſt perceive a Difference between

different Inclinations and Actions, of their own and others: in Conſequence of which, they muſt approve ſome, as right and good; and diſapprove others, as wrong and evil. Now this Diſtinction, which we are capable of ſeeing, God muſt ſee as much more clearly, as his Underſtanding is more perfect than ours. Therefore he muſt entirely love what is good, and utterly hate what is evil; and his Will muſt be, that all his rational Creatures ſhould practiſe the former, and avoid the latter. This he makes known to be his Will, in ſome Degree, to all Men, however ignorant, by natural Conſcience; and hath more fully made known to us, by the Revelation of his holy Word: wherein alſo, beſides thoſe Things, which we of ourſelves might have known to be fit, he hath ſignified his Pleaſure, that we ſhould obſerve ſome further Rules, which he knew to be uſeful and requiſite, though we ſhould otherwiſe not have diſcerned it. Now the Will and Pleaſure of a Perſon having Authority, as God hath abſolute Authority, is, when ſufficiently notified, a Law. Thoſe Laws of his, which human Reaſon was able

to

to teach us, are called natural or moral Laws: thoſe, which he hath added to them, are called poſitive ones. Obedience to both Sorts is our Duty; Tranſgreſſion of either is Sin: whether it be by neglecting what the Law commands, which is a Sin of Omiſſion; or doing what it forbids, which is a Sin of Commiſſion.

Further: as God hath a Right to give us Laws, he muſt have a Right to puniſh us, if we break them. And we all of us feel inwardly, that Sin deſerves this Puniſhment: which Feeling is what we call a Senſe of Guilt. Some Sins have more Guilt, that is, deſerve greater Puniſhment, than others: becauſe they are either worſe in their own Nature; or accompanied with Circumſtances, that aggravate, inſtead of alleviating them. Thus if bad Actions, known to be ſuch, are done with previous Deliberation and Contrivance, which are called wilful or preſumptuous Sins; they are very highly criminal. But if we do amiſs in ſome ſmaller Matter, through Inconſiderateneſs or other Weakneſs of Mind, or elſe through a ſudden unforeſeen Attack of Temptation; which

are uſually called Sins of Infirmity or Surpriſe: theſe, though real, are yet leſs Offences. And if, laſtly, we act wrong through invincible Ignorance, that is, have no Means of knowing better; then the Action is not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, a Fault in us, though it be in itſelf. But if we might, with a reaſonable Attention, have known our Duty, and did not attend; we are juſtly blameable, even for a careleſs Ignorance, and full as much for a deſigned one, as if we had known ever ſo well.

Another Difference in the Kinds of Sins is this: that though they be only in ſmaller Inſtances; yet if Perſons take ſo little Pains to guard againſt them, that they live in a conſtant or frequent Practice of them, which are called habitual Sins; the Guilt of theſe may be full as heavy as that of greater Tranſgreſſions, provided they be leſs common. But if they be great and habitually indulged alſo; that makes the worſt of Caſes.

Committing Sin can never be a ſlight Matter. For it is acting as our own Hearts tell us we ought not. It is likewiſe, for the

moſt Part, injuring, one Way or another, our Fellow-creatures: and it is always behaving undutifully and ungratefully to our Creator, who hath ſovereign Power over us, and ſhews continual Goodneſs to us. We may be ſure therefore, that the Puniſhment, due to the leaſt Sin, is ſuch as will give us Cauſe to wiſh from the Bottom of our Souls, that we had never done it. More enormous ones are of worſe Deſert, according to their Degree. And ſince Recompences proportionable to them are not, with any Conſtancy, diſtributed in this World; as certainly as God is juſt, they will in the next; unleſs we obtain Forgiveneſs in the mean Time. And all will be made miſerable, as long as they are wicked.

This is the Main of what human Abilities unaſſiſted ſeem capable of diſcovering to us concerning Sin and its Conſequences; excepting it be, that as we have a natural Approbation of what is good, ſo we have, along with it, a natural Proneneſs to what is evil: an Inconſiſtence, for which Reaſon finds it hard, if poſſible, to account.

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But here moſt ſeaſonably Revelation comes in; and teaches, not indeed all that we might wiſh, but all that we need to know of this whole Matter: that our firſt Parents were created upright; but ſoon tranſgreſſed a plain and eaſy Command of God, intended for a Trial of their Obedience: by which they perverted and tainted their Minds; forfeited the Immortality, which God had deſigned them; brought Diſeaſes and Death on their Bodies; and derived to us the ſame corrupt Nature and mortal Condition, to which they had reduced themſelves. An imperfect Illuſtration of this lamentable Change, and I give it for no other, we may have from our daily Experience, that wretched Poverty, fatal Diſtempers, and even vicious Inclinations, often deſcend from Parents to their Children. Now the ſinful Diſpoſitions, which our Origin from our primitive Parents hath produced in us, are called original Sin. And this Tranſgreſſion of theirs may, very conſiſtently with divine Juſtice, occaſion, as the Scripture ſhews it hath, our being condemned, as well as they, to temporal Sufferings and Death. For even innocent Creatures

have

have no Right to be exempt from them: and to fallen Creatures they are peculiarly inſtructive and medicinal. The ſame Tranſgreſſion may alſo, with equal Juſtice, occaſion our being expoſed to a more difficult Trial of our Obedience, than we ſhould elſe have undergone; indeed than we ſhould be able, by the Strength which remains in us, to ſupport. And thus, were we left to ourſelves, we muſt, in Conſequence of the Fall of our firſt Progenitors, become finally miſerable. But God is ready to give us more Strength, if we will aſk it: and he may undoubtedly ſubject us to any Difficulties that he pleaſes, provided he beſtows on us, whether naturally or ſupernaturally, the Power of going through them in the Manner, that he expects from us: which he certainly doth beſtow on all Men. And if they uſe it, they will be accepted by him in a proper Degree: what that is, we are no Judges.

But when, inſtead of reſiſting our bad Inclinations, as through the Grace of God we may, we voluntarily follow and indulge them; then we fall into actual Sin; and are

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in Strictneſs of Speech guilty, and deſerving of Puniſhment. And this Puniſhment the Scripture frequently expreſſes by the Name of Death. For Death being the moſt terrible to human Nature, of all the Puniſhments, that Man inflicts; it is uſed to ſignify the moſt terrible, that God inflicts; even thoſe, which extend beyond Death, and are therefore called *the ſecond Death*[a]. Accordingly our Saviour directs his Followers: *Be not afraid of them that kill the Body; and after that have no more, that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye ſhall fear. Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath Power to caſt into Hell: yea, I ſay unto you, fear him*[b].

The Nature and Duration of the future Sufferings, reſerved for Sinners, are moſt awfully deſcribed in the Word of God: the Declarations of which concerning them I ſhall ſoon have Occaſion to lay before you. But in the mean while we all know them to be ſuch, as may abundantly ſuffice to engage us in a moſt ſerious Inquiry, how

[a] Rev. xx. 14. xxi. 8. [b] Luke xii. 4, 5.

we

we ſhall obtain, what was propoſed to be explained.

II. *The Forgiveneſs of Sins.* Now thus much our own Reaſon evidently teaches; that when we have done amiſs, we are to undo it, as far as we can. We are to diſapprove it, and be ſorry for it, as we have great Cauſe; to beg Pardon of God, for having offended him; to make the beſt Amends we are able to our Fellow-creatures, if we have injured them; to be very humble in our Hearts, and very watchful in our future Conduct. Theſe Things, through God's Help, we can do: and theſe are all, that Nature directs us to do. Undoubtedly he will never accept leſs: but the Queſtion is, whether he will ſo far accept this, as to be reconciled to us upon it. Since Wickedneſs deſerves Puniſhment, it may be juſtly puniſhed. Being ſorry for it, is not being innocent of it. And the moſt careful Obedience afterwards no more makes a Compenſation for what went before, than avoiding to run into a new Debt pays off the old one: beſides that we never obey ſo well, as not to add continually ſome Degree of freſh Miſbehaviour.

haviour. God indeed is merciful; but he is equally righteous and holy, and abhorrent of Sin. And what can the mere Light of our own Underſtandings diſcover to us, with any Aſſurance, from theſe Attributes joined? We ſee, that in this World the moſt merciful Rulers, if they are juſt and wiſe alſo, which God is, often puniſh even thoſe Offenders, who repent the moſt heartily. The Honour and good Order of their Government requires it. And why may not he have Reaſons of the ſame, or even of a different Nature, for doing the ſame Thing?

Still the Caſe of Penitents muſt be more favourable, than that of others. And there is Ground for all ſuch to hope, that ſuch Pity, as can, will be ſhewn them in ſome Manner, though they cannot be ſure how, or to what Effect. And God hath been pleaſed to confirm this Hope, from Time to Time, by various Revelations, gradually unfolding his gracious Deſigns: till, by the coming of our bleſſed Lord, the whole Purpoſe of his Goodneſs was opened; as far as it is proper, that Mortals ſhould be acquainted with it.

From

From theſe Revelations, contained in the Bible, we learn, that Repentance alone, even the completeſt, would not be ſufficient to reinſtate us fully in God's Favour; much leſs the poor Endeavours towards it, which we of ourſelves are capable of uſing: but that our Pardon and Salvation depend on the compaſſionate Interceſſion of a Mediator appointed by our heavenly Father: that a Perſon, who ſhould deliver Mankind from the bitter Fruits of their Tranſgreſſions, had in general been promiſed, and the Promiſe been believed, from the earlieſt Ages; and more particular Notices of him gradually imparted to the ſucceſſive Generations of the choſen People: that at Length in the Seaſon, which infinite Wiſdom ſaw to be fitteſt, he appeared on Earth, in the Character of the only begotten Son of God; taught his Followers the Precepts, and ſet them the Example, of perfect Piety and Virtue; and after bearing cheerfully, for this Purpoſe, all the Inconveniences of mortal Life, ſubmitted to ſuffer a cruel Death from wicked Men, provoked by the Perfections, which they ought to have adored: that this voluntary

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Sacrifice of himſelf, the Almighty was pleaſed to accept from him, whoſe divine Nature, united to the human, gave it unſpeakable Value, as a Reaſon for entering into a Covenant of Mercy with all thoſe, who ſhould be influenced, by Faith in his Doctrines, to obey his Laws: that ſtill neither our Obedience, nor our Faith itſelf, is at all meritorious, or in any Degree the Cauſe of our Acceptance; for they are both of them God's Gift; and they are both, through our Fault, very imperfect: but that yet thankful Belief in Chriſt, as our Saviour from the Power and the Puniſhment of Sin, *working by Love*[c] to our Maker, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier, our Fellow-creatures, is appointed the Condition of our obtaining, and the Inſtrument of our receiving, Pardon.

The Reaſons of this Appointment *we ſee, as through a Glaſs darkly*[d]: yet enough of them to convince us of its being *the Wiſdom of God*, though *in a Myſtery*[e]. With Reſpect to ourſelves, it hath the moſt powerful Tendency to inſpire us with Humility, Gratitude

[c] Gal, v. 6. [d] 1 Cor. xiii. 12. [e] 1 Cor. ii. 7.

and

and Diligence. With Reſpect to the bleſſed *Jeſus*, it was a fit Reward for what he had done and ſuffered, to take thoſe into Favour again, for whom he had intereſted himſelf with ſuch inexpreſſible Goodneſs. And with Reſpect to God, it was a ſtrong Demonſtration of his Concern for the Glory of his Attributes, and the Honour of his Government, that he would not be reconciled to Sinners on any other Terms, than ſuch an Interpoſition of ſuch a Perſon in their Behalf: which yet, ſince he himſelf provided, as well as accepted, his Kindneſs to us is no leſs, than if he pardoned us without it. Thus then did *Mercy and Truth meet together, Righteouſneſs and Peace kiſs each other*[f]; and God ſhew himſelf *juſt, and* yet *the Juſtifier of them which believe in Jeſus*[g].

But then we muſt always remember, that none will be forgiven and made happy by the Means of Chriſt, but they who are reformed and made holy by his Means: that his Sacrifice is not to ſtand inſtead of

[f] Pſal. lxxxv. 10. [g] Rom. iii. 26.

our Repentance and Amendment; but is the Conſideration which induces God firſt to work in us pious Diſpoſitions, then to accept us, if we cultivate and exert them faithfully.

Perhaps the Benefit of this Sacrifice may extend, in a very valuable, though inferior Degree, even to thoſe who have had little or no Knowledge of Him, who offered it. But in ſuch Queſtions we have no Concern. Our Buſineſs is to take Care that it may extend to us, by embracing, with an active as well as joyful Faith, the gracious Tenders of the Goſpel Diſpenſation.

Indeed the firſt Advantage, that we have from it, is before we are capable of knowing our Happineſs, at the Time of our Baptiſm. For Baptiſm reſtores the Infants of believing Parents, as will be proved hereafter in explaining it, to that Aſſurance of immortal Life, which our firſt Parents loſt, and we by Conſequence. But when adminiſtred to Perſons of riper Years, as it conveys a further Privilege, the Pardon of their former actual Sins, it alſo requires a ſuitable Condition, the Exerciſe of an actual Faith, ſuch as

will produce future Obedience. And as Infants are baptized only on Preſumption of their coming to have this Faith in due Time; ſo, if they live, and refuſe to be inſtructed in it, or deſpiſe it, their Baptiſm will avail them Nothing. For it is a Covenant: at firſt indeed made for us; but to be afterwards acknowledged and ratified by us, as it is in Confirmation. And in this Covenant we engage, on our Part, to keep ourſelves, with an honeſt Care, free from Sin: and God engages, on his, to conſider us, (not becauſe of our Care, though on Condition of it, but for the Sake of Chriſt,) as free from Guilt; notwithſtanding ſuch Infirmities and Failings as may overtake well-meaning Perſons. He will not look on theſe as Breaches of his Covenant, but readily paſs them over; provided we make a general Confeſſion of them in our daily Prayers, and ſtrive againſt them with a reaſonable Diligence. For ſuch Things we cannot expect to avoid entirely: but greater Offences we may. And therefore, if we fall into any habitual Wickedneſs, or any ſingle Act of groſs and deliberate Sin; we

forfeit the Happineſs, to which our Baptiſm intitles us: and if we continue impenitent, the more Privileges we have enjoyed, the more ſeverely we ſhall be puniſhed. For *to whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall much be required* [h].

But if God allows us Time; and we make Uſe of it, not only to be ſorry for having lived ill, for this alone is not Goſpel Penitence; but to be ſorry from a Principle of Conſcience; and to ſhew of what Sort our Sorrow is, by living well afterwards, in all thoſe Reſpects, in which we have been faulty, we become intitled again to the divine Favour. For though the Scripture declares it *impoſſible to renew* ſome Sinners to *Repentance* [i]: yet if this be taken ſtrictly, it can mean only *Blaſphemers againſt the Holy Ghoſt* [k]. Beſides, *impoſſible*, in all Languages, often ſignifies no more than extremely difficult: and *with God all Things are poſſible* [l]. Experience proves, that great Numbers are *renewed to Repentance:* and that they ſhall not be forgiven, when they repent, is no

[h] Luke xii. 48. [i] Heb. vi. 4, 6. [k] Matth. xii. 31. [l] Matth. xix. 26.

where

where ſaid. It is true, *there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin*[m], no other Method of Salvation, than that, to which they have loſt their Claim. But ſtill, if they humbly apply for a freſh Intereſt in it; ſince the Apoſtle directs all Chriſtians to *reſtore ſuch* to their Communion, as Brethren, *in the Spirit of Meekneſs*[n]; there can be no Doubt, but God will receive them, as a Father, with Pity and Mercy. Indeed the Words of St. *John* alone would be ſufficient to baniſh all Deſpondency from the Breaſt of every Chriſtian Penitent. *My little Children, theſe Things I write unto you, that ye ſin not. But if any Man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt, the righteous; and he is the Propitiation for our Sins*[o].

You ſee then the ineſtimable Goodneſs of God, in providing Means, by which we not only ſhall be pardoned, but have the Comfort of knowing beforehand, that we ſhall. But then you ſee alſo the only Terms, on which we are to expect it. And theſe are, not that we live on in a Circle of ſinning and repenting; not that we abſtain from ſome Sins,

[m] Heb. x. 26. [n] Gal. vi. 1. [o] 1 John ii. 1, 2.

and indulge others: but that we ſo repent of all our Sins, as not wilfully to ſin again. And till we are arrived at this, we muſt never think ourſelves in a ſafe Condition. For, as on the one Hand, *if the wicked Man turn from his Wickedneſs, he ſhall live*[p]; ſo on the other, *if the righteous Man turn from his Righteouſneſs he ſhall die*[q]. *Bleſſed are they, whoſe Tranſgreſſion is forgiven, and whoſe Sin is covered. Bleſſed are they, to whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity, and in whoſe Spirit there is no Guile*[r].

[p] Ezek. xviii. 21, 27. [q] Ibid. 24. [r] Pſal. xxxii. 1, 2.

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LECTURE XVI.

CREED.

Articles XI, XII. Part I. *The Reſurrection of the Body, and the Life everlaſting.*

THE Reſurrection of the Body and Life everlaſting being the Conſequences of the preceding Article, the Forgiveneſs of Sins, our Belief of that comfortable Truth leads us naturally to believe theſe alſo. And as they complete the Whole of what we are concerned to know; ſo here the Profeſſion of our Faith happily concludes, having brought us to the *End of our Faith, the Salvation of our Souls*[a].

But, though this Part of our Creed expreſſes only two Things; yet it implies two

[a] 1 Peter i. 9.

more: and ſo comprehends the four following Particulars:

I. That the Souls of all Men continue after Death.

II. That their Bodies ſhall at the laſt Day be raiſed up, and reunited to them.

III. That both Souls and Bodies of good Perſons ſhall enjoy everlaſting Happineſs.

IV. That thoſe of the wicked ſhall undergo everlaſting Puniſhment.

I. That the Souls of all Men continue after Death. We are every one of us capable of perceiving and thinking, judging and reſolving, loving and hating, hoping and fearing, rejoicing and grieving. That Part of us, which doth theſe Things, we call the Mind or Soul. Now plainly this is not the Body. Neither our Limbs, nor our Trunk, nor even our Head, is what underſtands, and reaſons, and wills, and likes or diſlikes: but ſomething, that hath its Abode within the Head [b], and is unſeen. A little Conſideration will make any of you ſenſible of this. Then further: our Bodies

[b] In quo igitur loco eſt (mens)? Credo equidem in capite: & cur credam, adferre poſſum. Cic. Tuſc. Diſp. I. i. c. 29.

increaſe, from an unconceivable Smallneſs, to a very large Bulk, and waſte away again; and are changing, each Part of them, more or leſs, every Day. Our Souls, we know, continue all the while the ſame. Our Limbs may be cut off one after another, and periſh: yet the Soul not be impaired by it in the leaſt. All Feeling and Motion may be loſt almoſt throughout the Body, as in the Caſe of an univerſal Palſy: yet the Soul have loſt Nothing. And though ſome Diſeaſes do indeed diſorder the Mind: there is no Appearance, that any have a Tendency to deſtroy it. On the contrary, the greateſt Diſorders of the Underſtanding are often accompanied with firm Health and Strength of Body: and the moſt fatal Diſtempers of the Body are attended, to the very Moment of Death, with all poſſible Vigour and Livelineſs of Underſtanding. Since therefore theſe two are plainly different Things; though we knew no further, there would be no Reaſon to conclude, that one of them dies, becauſe the other doth. But ſince we do know further, that it can ſurvive ſo many Changes of the other; this alone

alone affords a fair Probability, that it may ſurvive the great Change of Death. Indeed whatever is once in Being, we are to ſuppoſe continues in Being, till the contrary appears. Now the Body, we perceive, becomes at Death inſenſible, and corrupts. But to imagine the ſame Thing of the Soul, in which we perceive no Change at that Time, would be almoſt as groundleſs, as if having frequently heard the Muſic of an Organ, but never ſeen the Perſon that played on it, we ſhould ſuppoſe him dead, on finding the Inſtrument incapable of playing any more. For the Body is an Inſtrument adapted to the Soul. The latter is our proper Self: the former is but ſomething joined to us for a Time. And though, during that Time, the Connection is very cloſe; yet nothing hinders, but we may be as well after the Separation of our Soul from our preſent Body, as we were before, if not better.

Then conſider further: When the Body dies, only the preſent Compoſition and Frame of it is diſſolved, and falls in Pieces: not the leaſt ſingle Particle, of all that make

make it up, returns to Nothing; or can do, unleſs God, who gave it Being, thinks fit to take that Being away. Now we have no Reaſon to imagine the Soul made up of Parts, though the Body is. On the contrary, ſo far as the acuteſt Reaſoners are able to judge, what perceives and wills muſt be one uncompounded Subſtance. And not being compounded, it cannot be diſſolved, and therefore probably cannot die[c].

God indeed may put an End to it, when he pleaſes. But ſince he hath made it of a Nature to laſt for ever, we cannot well conceive, that he will deſtroy it after ſo ſhort a Space, as that of this Life: eſpecially conſidering, that he hath planted in our Breaſts an earneſt Deſire of Immortality, and a Horror at the Thought of ceaſing to be. It is true, we dread alſo the Death of our Bodies, and yet we own they muſt die: but then we believe, that they were not at firſt intended to die: and that they ſhall live again wonderfully improved. God hath in no Caſe given us natural Diſpoſitions and Hopes, which he purpoſed at the ſame Time to diſappoint: much leſs, when they are ſuch,

[c] See Cic. Tuſc. Diſp. I. 29.

that

that the wiſeſt and beſt Men feel the moſt of them, and are made ſtill wiſer and better by them.

Beſides, there are plainly in our Souls Capacities for vaſtly higher Improvements, both in Knowledge and Goodneſs, than any one arrives at in this Life. The beſt inclined, and moſt induſtrious, undeniably have not near Time enough to become what they could be. And is it likely, that Beings qualified for doing ſo much ſhould have ſo little Opportunity for it; and ſink into Nothing, without ever attaining their proper Maturity and Perfection? But further: not to urge, that Happineſs here is very unequally divided between Perſons equally intitled to it; which yet is hard to reconcile with God's impartial Bounty: it hath been already obſerved, in ſpeaking of the Judgment to come, that though, in general, the Courſe of Things in this World doth bear witneſs to God's Love of Virtue, and Hatred of Sin; yet, in Multitudes of particular Caſes, Nothing of this Kind appears. Not only good Perſons often undergo, in common with others, the largeſt Shares of Evil

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in Life; and bad Perſons enjoy, in common with others, the higheſt Degrees of Proſperity in it: but the former are frequently Sufferers, and ſometimes even to Death, for the very Sake of their Duty; and the latter gain every Sort of worldly Advantages by the very Means of their Wickedneſs. Yet evidently there is a Difference between right Behaviour and wrong: and God muſt ſee this Difference: and his Will muſt be, that Mankind ſhould obſerve it: and accordingly we feel ourſelves inwardly bound ſo to do. Now is it poſſible, that a Being of perfect Juſtice and Holineſs, of infinite Wiſdom and Power, ſhould have ordered Things ſo, that obeying him and our own Conſciences ſhould ever make us miſerable, and diſobeying them prove beneficial to us, on the Whole? We cannot ſurely imagine, that he will permit any one ſuch Caſe to happen. And therefore ſince in this World ſuch Caſes do happen; this World is not our final State: but another will come after it, in which every one ſhall be recompenſed according to his Works. Without this Belief,

lief, Religion and Virtue would often want ſufficient Motives: with it they never can: and therefore this Belief is true.

Strongly as theſe Arguments prove the Doctrine of a Life after Death; yet it receives a conſiderable Addition of Strength from the univerſal Agreement of all Mankind in it, with but few Exceptions, from the very Beginning. Of the earlieſt Ages indeed we have only ſhort Accounts: yet enough to judge, what their Notions of this Point were. What could they be indeed, when they knew, that *Abel*, with whom God declared himſelf pleaſed, was murdered by his Brother for that very Reaſon? Surely his Brother's Hatred did not do him more Harm, than God's Love of him did him Good. That would be thinking lowly indeed of the Almighty. And therefore, ſince plainly he had not the Benefit of his Piety here, there muſt be another Place, in which he received it. Again, when *Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him*[d]: could this peculiar Favour be only depriving him, before his natural Time, of the En-

[d] Gen. v. 24.

joyments

joyments of the preſent State? Muſt it not be admitting him to thoſe of a future one? When God called himſelf, in a diſtinguiſhed Senſe, *the God of Abraham* and the Patriarchs, what had they enjoyed in this Life, anſwerable to ſo extraordinary a Manner of ſpeaking? Many, in all Likelihood, both equalled and exceeded them in worldly Satisfactions: But *therefore*, as the Epiſtle to the Hebrews teaches, *God was not aſhamed to be called their God, becauſe he had prepared for them a* heavenly *City*. When *Jacob confeſſed himſelf a Pilgrim and Stranger on Earth, he* plainly *declared*, as the ſame Epiſtle obſerves, that *he deſired a better Country*[e] for his Home. Again, when, mourning for the ſuppoſed Death of his Son *Joſeph*, he ſaith, he *will go down to him*: we tranſlate the next Word wrongly, *into the Grave*[f], as if he meant to have his Body laid by him: that could not be; for he thought him devoured by wild Beaſts: it means, into the inviſible State, the State of departed Souls. And in this Senſe it is ſaid of ſeveral of the Patriarchs, that

[e] Heb. xi. 13—16. [f] Gen. xxxvii. 35.

they

they were gathered unto their People[g], and of *all that Generation*, which lived with *Joſhua*, that they *were gathered unto their Fathers*[h].

In the Time of *Moſes* we find, that even the Heathens had a ſtrong Notion of another Life. For they had built a ſuperſtitious Practice upon it, of ſeeking to the dead[i], and enquiring of them concerning Things to come. A fooliſh and wicked Cuſtom indeed: but however, it ſhews the Belief was deeply rooted in them. And though future Recompences were not, directly and expreſsly, either promiſed to good Perſons, or threatened to bad, in the Law of *Moſes*: yet that might be, not becauſe they were unknown, but becauſe God thought them ſufficiently known; and for Reaſons of unſearchable Wiſdom, did not think proper, that *Moſes* ſhould make any conſiderable Addition to that Knowledge: of which there was the leſs Occaſion, as temporal Rewards and Puniſhments were more equally adminiſtered by Providence amongſt the Jews, than any other People. Beſides, a Life to

[g] Gen. xxv. 8. xxxv. 29. xlix. 29.
[h] Judg. ii. 10.
[i] Deut, xviii. 9—12.

come

come is not mentioned in the Laws of our own Nation neither: though we know, they were made by ſuch, as profeſſed firmly to believe it. And the Reaſon is, partly that national Laws are more immediately deſigned to procure Men Peace and Proſperity on Earth, than Happineſs in Heaven: and partly alſo, that they propoſe ſuch Encouragements, as they are able to beſtow; and ſuch Penalties, as they are able to inflict; which are thoſe of this World only. *Moſes* indeed went beyond the Sanctions, which are in Man's Power: and aſſured the Jews of God's Bleſſings on their Obedience, and Curſes on their Diſobedience. But as, in ſo doing, he ſpoke, not ſo much to ſingle Perſons conſidered ſingly, as to the whole People in a Body; theſe Bleſſings and Curſes could be only, what they were, thoſe of the preſent Life: becauſe the Diviſion of Mankind into Nations will ſubſiſt no longer; and therefore national Good or Evil can be enjoyed or ſuffered only here. But ſtill, ſince it is evident, through the Whole of his Law, that the Jews had the moſt ſerious Belief of a juſt Providence; and alſo, from the above-

mentioned Proofs, that they believed a future State; surely they must believe in general, that this Providence would be so exerted in that State, as to reward the good, and punish the wicked. More and stronger Evidences of this will be given under the second Particular, *the Resurrection of the Body*.

At present I shall go on to observe further, that not only the Jews, but all the Nations of the World, whether learned or unlearned, whether known in former Times or discovered of later Times, appear to have been persuaded, that the Souls of Men continue after Death. Now this so universal Agreement must surely have arisen from an inward Principle of Nature, dictating to all Persons that they are designed for a future Existence; and that as they are plainly Creatures accountable for their Actions, yet often do not account here, they must expect to do it hereafter. Or should the Notion be supposed to have its Origin from Tradition; that Tradition must have been derived from what God himself had taught the first of Men: else it had never reached to all Men: and it must have found some powerful Confirmation in the Minds and Hearts of Men:

else

elſe in ſo great a Length of Time, amidſt ſo many Changes of human Circumſtances, it muſt have been univerſally worn out and forgotten.

Indeed, before our Saviour's Days, Length of Time, and Folly, and Wickedneſs, had every where obſcured and darkened this great Truth, by fabulous Additions and abſurd Alterations: which hindered the good Influence of it on ſome Perſons, and diſcredited the Belief of it with others. And had there been none of theſe Obſtacles thrown in their Way; though Reaſon and Conſcience teach the Doctrine of a future State; yet by the Generality of Men, Reaſon is little exerciſed, and Conſcience little conſulted, in Relation to unwelcome Truths. And though the Old Teſtament gave ſome further Intimations of it; yet theſe were neither very clear and explicit, nor known by the greateſt Part of the World. No Wonder then if their Concluſions, concerning a Matter ſo intirely out of Sight, were often doubtful, and often falſe: and thus they were miſled in a Subject of the greateſt Importance to them of all others. It is

therefore one ineſtimable Benefit of the Chriſtian Revelation, that our bleſſed Lord hath throughly removed the preceding Uncertainties and Errors; and *brought Life and Immortality to* perfect *Light through the Goſpel*[k]: not only confirming by divine Authority whatever had been rationally taught before; but adding, by the ſame Authority, ſeveral intereſting Particulars, which human Faculties could not diſcover: and which partly have been mentioned to you, in diſcourſing on the general Judgment; and partly will be, in what I ſhall further ſay under the Heads now propoſed.

All that remains to be ſaid under the firſt is, that neither the full Reward of good Perſons deceaſed is as yet beſtowed on them, nor the full Puniſhment of the wicked as yet inflicted; theſe Things being to follow the general Reſurrection: but that ſtill, ſince our Saviour deſcribes the Soul of *Lazarus*, as *carried by Angels into Abraham's Boſom*, and there *comforted*[l]; ſince he promiſed the penitent Thief, that he ſhould *be that Day with him in Paradiſe*[m]; and St.

[k] 2 Tim. i. 10. [l] Luke xvi. 22, 25.
[m] Luke xxiii. 43.

Paul ſpeaks of being *preſent with Chriſt*, as the immediate Conſequence of Death, and *far better*[a] than this Life: therefore the State of thoſe, *who die in the Lord*, is now a State, not of Inſenſibility, but Happineſs: wherein they *are bleſſed*, in *reſting from their Labours*[e]; and doubtleſs *rejoice, with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory*[f], in the Proſpect of that completer Felicity, which the righteous Judge of all will hereafter give them.

For as to the Pretence of a Purgatory, where the greateſt Part of good Perſons are to ſuffer grievous temporal Puniſhments, after Death, for their Sins, though the eternal Puniſhment is remitted: it hath no Ground in the leaſt. Our Saviour's ſaying, *that the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven in this World, or that which is to come*[g], is merely ſaying, it ſhall not be forgiven at all, but puniſhed both here and hereafter. *The Priſon, out of which*, he ſaith, the Perſon, who agrees not with his Brother, *ſhall not come, till he hath paid the laſt Farthing*[h]; is either a literal Priſon of this

[a] 2 Cor. v. 8. Phil. i. 23. [e] Rev. xiv. 13.
[f] 1 Pet. i. 8. [g] Matth. xii. 31, 32. [h] Matth. v. 26.

World, or the Prison of Hell in the next, out of which the contentious and uncharitable shall never come, for they can never pay the last Farthing. *The Spirits in Prison*, to whom St. *Peter* saith, *Christ by his Spirit preached*, he saith also, were *the disobedient in the Days of Noah*[s], with whom *his Spirit strove*[t], whilst they were on this Earth: and who for their Disobedience were sent, not to Purgatory, but to a worse Confinement. When St. *Paul* bids Men *take Heed, how they build on the Foundation* of Christianity; adding, that the *Fire shall try every Man's Work*; and *if any Man's Work shall be burnt, he shall suffer Loss*; *but* still *shall be saved, yet so as by Fire*[u]: he means, that Persons must not mix Doctrines of their own Invention with the Gospel of Christ, which in this Instance, amongst others, those of the Church of *Rome* have done: for when *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming Fire*[w], to judge the World, such Notions will not stand the Trial; they that hold them will be Losers by them; and though still they may be saved, it will be

[s] 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20.
[t] Gen. vi. 3.
[u] 1 Cor. iii. 10—15.
[w] 2 Thess. i. 7.

with

with Difficulty and Danger: as a Perſon eſcapes, when his Houſe is burning. When, laſtly, many of the ancient Chriſtians prayed for the dead; beſides that they had no Warrant for ſo doing, it was only for the Completion of their Happineſs, whom they apprehended to be already in Paradiſe: it was for the Apoſtles, Saints, and Martyrs; for the bleſſed Virgin herſelf: whom they certainly did not think to be in Purgatory. And obſerve, if they prayed for them, they did not pray to them. Purgatory then is nothing, but an imaginary Place, invented by Men, to give bad Perſons Hope, and good Perſons Dread of being put into it; that they may get what they can from both, by pretending to deliver them out of it again. Fear not therefore ſuch vain Terrors. *The Souls of the righteous are in the Hands of the Lord: and there ſhall no Torment touch them*[x].

Thoſe of the wicked, on the contrary, as they are to be hereafter with the Devils, we may juſtly believe are, like them, now *delivered into Chains of Darkneſs, to be reſerved unto Judgment*[y]: and though the worſt of their Sufferings ſhall not begin, till

[x] Wiſd. iii. 1. [y] 2 Pet. ii. 4.

the Day of Judgment comes; yet are they repreſented by our Saviour, as being, inſtantly after Death, in a Place, where they are *tormented*[a]: and undoubtedly, the Loſs of their paſt Pleaſures and Gains, Remorſe for their paſt Follies and Crimes, Deſpair of Pardon, and the *fearful Looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation, which ſhall devour them*[a]; cannot but make their intermediate State intenſely miſerable: and what then will their final one be! God grant, that thinking frequently and ſeriouſly of theſe awful Subjects, *we may know* and conſider, *in this our Day, the Things that belong to our Peace*, before *they are* for ever *hid from our Eyes*[b].

[a] Luke xvi. 25. [a] Heb. x. 27. [b] Luke xix. 42.

LEC-

LECTURE XVII.

CREED.

Articles XI, XII.—Part II. *The Reſurrection of the Body, and the Life everlaſting.*

UNDER the two laſt Articles of the Creed, as I have already obſerved to you, are comprehended four Points of Doctrine:

I. That the Souls of all Men continue after Death.

II. That their Bodies ſhall at the laſt Day be raiſed up, and reunited to them.

III. That both Souls and Bodies of good Perſons ſhall enjoy everlaſting Happineſs.

IV. That thoſe of the wicked ſhall undergo everlaſting Puniſhment.

The

The first of these being the Foundation of all the rest; I chose to enlarge on the Proof and Explanation of it. Now I proceed to shew,

II. That the Bodies of all Men shall be raised up again, and reunited to their Souls. This Reason alone cannot prove: and accordingly the Heathens were ignorant of it: but it carries with it no Contradiction to Reason in the least. For God is infinite, both in Power and Knowledge: and it is unquestionably as possible to bring together and enliven the scattered Parts of our Body again, as it was to make them out of Nothing, and give them Life, at first. And therefore, since we must acknowledge the original Formation of our Bodies to have been of God, we have abundant Cause to be assured, that he can, after Death, form them anew, whenever he pleases. And that this will be done, was probably implied in that general Promise, made to our first Parents, that *the Seed of the Woman*, our blessed Lord, *should bruise the Serpent's Head*[a]; destroy his Power; and consequently take

[a] Gen. iii. 15.

away

away the Curſe, under which he had brought Mankind. For as Part of that Curſe conſiſts in the Death of the Body, it cannot be completely taken away, but by the Reſurrection of the Body. In After-times, *Abraham*, we find, had ſo ſtrong a Belief of the Poſſibility of this Article, that he was willing, on the divine Command, to ſacrifice his Son: *reaſoning*, as the Epiſtle to the Hebrews teaches us, *that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead*[b]. And indeed he could not have been induced to this, by any other Reaſoning. God had promiſed him, that by his Son *Iſaac* he ſhould have a numerous Poſterity: and this Promiſe he firmly believed. Now he muſt know, it could never be fulfilled, if *Iſaac* was to be ſacrificed, but by his riſing again: and therefore he muſt be perſuaded, that he would riſe again for that Purpoſe. On proceeding ſomewhat further in the ſacred Hiſtory, we find *Job* expreſſing himſelf on this Head, if we at all underſtand his Words, in very ſtrong Terms: *I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he ſhall ſtand at the*

[b] Heb. xi. 19.

latter Day upon the Earth. And though, after my Skin, this Body be deſtroyed[c]; *yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God*[d]. Again, when *Elijah* was taken up alive into Heaven, this muſt ſurely give an Expectation, that the Body, as well as the Soul, was to partake of future Happineſs. And when the ſeveral Perſons, mentioned in the Old Teſtament, were raiſed up to Life in this World, it could not but increaſe the Probability of a general Reſurrection in the next. Then in the Book of *Daniel* we have an expreſs Declaration, that a Time ſhould come, when *they, who ſlept in the Duſt of the Earth, ſhould awake: ſome to everlaſting Life, and ſome to Shame, and everlaſting Contempt*[e]. And indeed, when thoſe, whom we commonly call the three Children, in the former Part of that Book, tell the King, that even though it were not the Pleaſure of God to deliver them from the fiery Furnace, yet *would they not ſerve his Gods*[f]; on what other Principle could they ſo ra-

[c] So, I think, the Original ſhould be tranſlated,
[d] Job. xix. 25, 26. [e] Dan. xii. 2. [f] Dan. iii. 17, 18,

tionally,

tionally, or did they ſo probably ſay this, as on that, which the Brethren in the Book of Maccabees explicitly profeſs? There, one of them, ſtretching forth his Hands to the Torment, ſaith, *Theſe I had from Heaven: and for his Laws I deſpiſe them; and from him I hope to receive them again.* Another, *It is good, being put to Death by Men, to look for Hope from God, to be raiſed up again by him.* And laſtly, the Mother declares to her Children: *I neither gave you Birth, nor Life; nor was it I, that formed your Members: but doubtleſs the Creator of the World, who formed the Generation of Man, and found out the Beginning of all Things, will alſo of his Mercy give you Breath and Life again; as you now regard not yourſelves for his Laws Sake*[g]. In the later Times indeed of the Jewiſh Church, not a few denied this Doctrine: but much the greater Number held it; *allowing*, as St. *Paul* acquainted *Felix, that there ſhall be a Reſurrection, both of the juſt and unjuſt*[h].

[g] 2 Macc. vii. 10—23. [h] Acts xxiv. 15.

Yet

Yet ſtill, the full Confirmation of it was reſerved for our Saviour to give: who, having in his Life-time raiſed up three ſeveral Perſons, as you may read at large in the Evangeliſts, raiſed up himſelf from the dead, in the laſt Place; to afford us the ſtrongeſt Demonſtration poſſible, that he both can and will raiſe us all at the Day of Judgment.

This great Event will doubtleſs, when it comes to paſs, exhibit to the whole Univerſe an aſtoniſhing Evidence of the Power and the Truth of God: who may eaſily have many Reaſons for reſtoring our Bodies, which we apprehend not; beſides thoſe, which in ſome Meaſure we do apprehend: that the Soul of Man being originally, and in the State of Innocence, united to a Body, is probably capable of completer Perception and Action, and conſequently of higher Degrees of Reward or Puniſhment, in that State, than a ſeparate one, or at leaſt will be ſo, with ſuch a Body, as in the next Life ſhall be allotted to it: and likewiſe that our Belief of enjoying Happineſs, or ſuffering Miſery, in both Parts of our Frame here-

hereafter, must naturally incline us to preserve the Purity of both here: abstaining, or *cleansing ourselves, from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God*[i].

The Truth and Reasonableness of the Doctrine being thus established; it ought to be no Objection, that several Particulars relating to it exceed our Comprehension. *How the dead are raised*, it is sufficient that God knows; and by no Means wonderful, that we do not: for we scarce know, how any one Part of the Course of Nature is carried on. And as to the Inquiry, that follows this in St. *Paul, With what Bodies do they come*[k]? we are taught, they shall be so far the same Bodies, that every one shall have properly his own, and be truly the same Person he was before: but so far different, that those of good Persons will be subject to none of the Sufferings, none of the Infirmities, none of the Necessities of this Life. For, to use the same Apostle's Words, *What is sown in Corruption, shall be raised in Incorruption: what is sown in Dishonour, shall*

[i] 2 Cor. vii. 1. [k] 1 Cor. xv. 35.

be

be raiſed in Glory: what is ſown a natural Body, ſhall be raiſed a ſpiritual Body[l]. But the particular Nature of ſpiritual Bodies, or the Diſtinction that ſhall be made in them, between the more eminent in Goodneſs and their Inferiors, *as one Star differeth from another Star in Glory*[m]; theſe Things we are not qualified, in our preſent State, to underſtand. And it is ſome Degree of Weakneſs even to aſk Queſtions about them: but would be much greater, to attempt giving Anſwers. I ſhall therefore only add, that ſuch of the good, as *are* found *alive at the coming of the Lord*[n], *ſhall not ſleep*, or die, and therefore cannot riſe again; but *ſhall be changed*[o] into the ſame Likeneſs with thoſe who do: as the Scripture hath plainly taught us. But what the Appearance and Condition of the Bodies of wicked Perſons will be at the Reſurrection, it hath not, I think, afforded us the leaſt Knowledge, further than is implied in the Deſcription of their Puniſhment, of which I ſhall treat before I conclude: and let us be ſo wiſe, as

[l] 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44. [m] Ibid. 41. [n] 1 Theſſ. iv. 15. [o] 1 Cor. xv. 51.

to

to dread the Terrors, that are thus concealed from us.

Concerning the general Judgment, which is to come immediately after the Reſurrection, I have ſpoken under the Article of the Creed, which relates to it: and therefore proceed now to the Conſequences of that Judgment, by ſhewing you,

III. That both the Souls and Bodies of the pious and virtuous will enjoy *everlaſting Life:* that is, in their Caſe, Happineſs. For a happy Life being the only one, that is a Bleſſing: Life in Scripture, very commonly ſignifies Felicity; and Death, Miſery.

Now that good Perſons will, ſooner or later, be recompenſed by a good God, is an undoubted Truth. But then as no one is perfectly good, and many have been very bad: there is Room for much Doubt, who hath a Right to apply this Comfort to himſelf, and who not. But what Reaſon might be at a Loſs to determine, the Scripture hath cleared up; and intitled all to Pardon and Reward, who truly repent of their Sins;

and ſincerely, though not without Mixtures of human Frailty, obey God, from a Principle of Faith in Chriſt, and in Reliance on the Grace of the Holy Ghoſt. Still, after this, Reaſon unaſſiſted can only gueſs, of what Nature, of what Degree, of what Duration, this Reward will be. And here once more Revelation interpoſes, and moſt happily enlightens us. *For Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit*[p]. Not that any exact account is given us, of the Particulars, that ſhall make up our future Bliſs: for in all Probability we are not capable of receiving ſuch a one: our preſent Faculties are not fitted for it.

But however, in general, our Saviour tells us, we ſhall be *as the Angels of God in Heaven*[q]. Nay, his beloved Diſciple St. *John* tells us, that, though *it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be, this we know, that*

[p] 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. [q] Matth. xxii. 30.

when

when God ſhall appear we ſhall be like him[r]. Now to be like God implies, in few Words, every Thing deſireable, that ever ſo many Words can expreſs. Further yet, a Voice from Heaven proclaims, in the Revelation, that we ſhall be free, in that State, from every Thing, that is uneaſy: For *God ſhall wipe away all Tears from our Eyes, and there ſhall be no more Death, nor Sorrow, nor Crying, neither ſhall there be any more Pain*[s]. And Multitudes of Scriptures aſſure us, that we ſhall enjoy every Thing, that is delightful: for they uſe the nobleſt and ſtrongſt Images, of all that in this World is great and ſplendid, and capable of giving the moſt exalted and moſt refined Satisfactions, to repreſent that Happineſs figuratively, which cannot be literally deſcribed.

Our vile Bodies ſhall be *faſhioned like unto the glorious Body*[t] of our bleſſed Lord: which, in his temporary Transfiguration here on Earth, *ſhone as the Sun; and his Raiment*

[r] 1 John iii. 2. [s] Rev. xxi. 4. [t] Phil. iii. 21.

was white as the Light[u]. They ſhall be freed from all Tendency to Decay or Diſorder; and become unwearied Inſtruments for every excellent Purpoſe, to that better Part, which they uſed to *preſs down*[w]. They ſhall doubtleſs alſo have ſuch Gratifications allotted to them, as will ſuit, though not their preſent groſs Nature, yet their future ſpiritual Condition: and be adorned with all the Dignity and Beauty, that ought naturally to accompany abſolute Innocence, univerſal Love, divine Favour, and heavenly Joy.

Then for our Minds, when once *the Spirits of juſt Men* are *made perfect*[x], as they ſhall be, in every Thing worthy and amiable: what Pleaſure muſt we take in meeting again the dear Objects of our former Affections, now become infinitely more deſerving of them; in converſing with all the great and good Perſons that ever were, concerning the various Scenes of this preſent World, and the bleſſed Exchange that we have made of it for a better: in learning from them, and

[u] Matth. xvii. 2. [w] Wiſd. ix. 15. [x] Heb. xii. 23.

that

that *innumerable Company of Angels* [y], which miniſter to God's Will, continually new Inſtruction, concerning all his Works of Nature, Providence and Grace! What ſurpriſing Advances muſt we make by theſe Means in moſt pleaſing Knowledge: what rapturous Engagements in mutual Friendſhip! Nor can it be queſtioned, but ſuch Employments too, however beyond our Reach to gueſs at them now, will be aſſigned to each Perſon, as ſhall produce him high Honour, and equal Happineſs. But above all Happineſs will be that of inceſſantly ſeeing and loving God, and feeling that we are beloved by him. Thus *ſhall we be abundantly ſatisfied with the Fatneſs of his Houſe, and made to drink of the River of his Pleaſures: for with him is the Fountain of Life* [z], *in his Preſence is Fulneſs of Joy, and at his right Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore* [a]. Were we to have a Proſpect, that our Felicity would end; the more exquiſite our Enjoyments were, the more melancholy our Reflections might be. But in the Word

[y] Heb. xii. 22. [z] Pſal. xxxvi. 8, 9. [a] Pſal. xvi. 11.

of God we find repeated Assurances, that *the righteous shall go into Life eternal*[b]; that *the Inheritance, reserved in Heaven for us, is incorruptible, and fadeth not away*[c]. Nay, indeed, as their will always be Room for finite Creatures, to advance without End towards him, who is infinite; and as every Improvement in Perfection must be of itself a fresh Delight, and will certainly be rewarded by our Maker with fresh Bounties, we have Reason to conclude, that our Happiness, far from ever ending, will be continually increasing to all Eternity.

It is true, the greatest, the ablest, the best of us merit no such Blessedness: far from it. But still, what *God only wise*[d] hath not thought too much to promise, the meanest and most ignorant may humbly expect. They are as capable, as others, of Love and Duty to him, Good-will to their Fellow-creatures, and moral Government of themselves. Now these are the Things which he values; the true Seeds of future Bliss: and whoever cultivates them faithfully, will be sure to reap

[b] Matth. xxv. 46. Rom. ii. 7. [c] 1 Pet. i. 4.
[d] Rom. xvi. 27. 1 Tim. i. 17. Jude, verse 25.

their

their Fruit, each in Proportion to his Improvement. And thus every one ſhall be happy to the Height of his Capacity: neither deſpiſing thoſe below him, nor envying thoſe above him. But, though we ought to dwell upon this moſt delightful and uſeful Subject, in our Thoughts, much more than we do, we muſt now turn our Eyes from it to a very different View, ſet before us.

IV. That the Souls and Bodies of the wicked ſhall undergo everlaſting Puniſhment.

This, it muſt be owned, is not explicitly mentioned in the Creed. And God had rather, that we ſhould be moved to obey him by Love, and Hope of his Favour, than by Fear of his Anger. But both Motives are implied in this Article. For though Life in Scripture more eſpecially means Happineſs; yet its original Senſe is only Continuance in Being, whether happy or miſerable: and as the wicked are raiſed, and judged in order to ſuffer what they have deſerved, ſo they muſt live afterwards for the ſame Purpoſe.

That Diſobedience to God can never end well, is the plaineſt Truth in the World; for Nothing is hid from his Knowledge, Nothing can eſcape his Power: he is holy as well as good; beſides that Goodneſs itſelf requires, the incorrigibly bad to be made Examples, for the Sake of deterring others. Yet leſt, after all, they ſhould promiſe themſelves that he will ſpare them, he hath ſolemnly and repeatedly declared, that he will not. In this World however, many ſuch come off, to all Appearance, with Impunity; committing much Evil, and enjoying much Good. And they, who are puniſhed, are often but ſlightly puniſhed; and ſeldom according to the Degree of their Crimes: for the deliberate and artful Sinners, who are the worſt, uſually fare beſt here below. As ſure therefore as God is juſt and true, another State remains, in which all this will be ſet right.

What Sufferings, in particular, the divine Juſtice will then inflict on unpardoned Sinners, Reaſon cannot determine: and Revelation hath given us only general and figurative Deſcriptions of them; but ſuch De-

ſcriptions, as are beyond all Things terrible: and I ſhall lay them before you, not in my own Words, but thoſe of holy Writ. The Judge of all ſhall ſay unto them, *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*[e]. There *they ſhall drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God, which is poured out, without Mixture, into the Cup of his Indignation, and ſhall be tormented with Fire and Brimſtone; and the Smoke of their Torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no Reſt, Day nor Night*[f]: *their Worm ſhall not die, neither ſhall their Fire be quenched*[g].

How ſevere ſoever theſe Denunciations may appear to us, aſſuredly the Threatenings of God will not be vain Terrors. We are partial and incompetent Judges in our own Caſe; prone to flatter and deceive ourſelves. But he knows exactly, what Sin deſerves, and what the Honour of his Government requires: from his Declarations therefore we are to learn our Fate. *He hath ſet before us Life and Death: and whether we*

[e] Matth. xxv. 14. [f] Rev. xiv. 10, 11. [g] Iſa. lxvi. 24. Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.

like

like, ſhall be given us [h]. If therefore the latter be our wilful Choice, in which we obſtinately perſiſt; what Wonder, if we are left to it? For Sin and Miſery muſt and will be Companions for ever. Not that, in any Caſe, the Anger of God ſhall prevail over his Juſtice: but the Degree of each Perſon's Condemnation ſhall be ſo exactly proportioned to that of his Guilt, that when the Eyes of Sinners, which here they endeavour to ſhut, are opened, as they ſhall be hereafter, to ſee what their Deeds have merited; *every Mouth ſhall be ſtopped* [i], and *all Fleſh be ſilent before the Lord* [k]. For every Circumſtance, that can either aggravate or excuſe, will be impartially weighed; and *ſome be* accordingly *beaten with many Stripes, and ſome with few* [l]. But what the loweſt Degree of the Almighty's final Vengeance may amount to, God forbid we ſhould any of us try: for whoever ſins, purpoſely or careleſsly, in Hopes of a ſmall Puniſhment, will for that very Reaſon deſerve a heavy one.

[h] Eccluſ. xv. 17. [i] Rom. iii. 19. [k] Zech. ii. 15.
[l] Luke xii. 47, 48.

Let us all therefore make the Uſe that we ought, both of the Terrors and the Mercies of the Lord: awing ourſelves by the former from tranſgreſſing our Duty, and encouraging ourſelves by the latter to the utmoſt Diligence in performing it: that ſo we may paſs through Life with Comfort, meet Death with Cheerfulneſs, and having faithfully ſerved God in this World, be eternally and abundantly rewarded by him in the next.

LECTURE XVIII.

First Commandment.

THE whole Duty of Man conſiſts in three Points: renouncing what God hath forbidden us, believing what he hath taught us, and doing what he hath required of us: which accordingly are the Things promiſed in our Name at our Baptiſm. The two former I have already explained to you. And therefore I proceed at preſent to the third.

Now the Things, which God requires to be done, are of two Sorts: either ſuch, as have been always the Duty of all Men: or ſuch, as are peculiarly the Duty of Chriſtians. And our Catechiſm very properly treats of the former Sort firſt, comprehending

ing them under thoſe ten Commandments, which were delivered by the Creator of the World, on Mount *Sinai*, in a moſt awful Manner, as you may read in the 19th and 20th Chapters of *Exodus*. For though indeed they were then given to the Jews particularly, yet the Things contained in them are ſuch, as all Mankind from the Beginning were bound to obſerve[a]. And therefore, even under the Moſaic Diſpenſation, they, and the Tables on which they were engraven, and the Ark in which they were put, were diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of God's Ordinances by a peculiar Regard, as containing the Covenant of the Lord[b]. And though the Moſaic Diſpenſation be now at an End, yet concerning theſe moral Precepts of it our Saviour declares, that *one Jot or one Tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the Law, till all be fulfilled*[c]. Accordingly we find both him, and his Apoſtles, quoting theſe ten Commandments, as Matter of perpetual

[a] Decem ſermones illi in tabulis nihil novum docent, ſed quod obliteratum fuerat admonent. Novatian. de Hæb. Judaicis, c. 3. [b] Exod. xxxiv. 28. Deut. iv. 13. ix. 9, 11, 15. Joſh. iii. 11. 1 Kings viii. 9, 21. 2 Chr. v. 10. vi. 11. [c] Matth. v. 18.

Obligation

Obligation to Chriſtians: who are now, as the Jews were formerly, *the Iſrael of God*[a].

Indeed the whole New Teſtament, and eſpecially the Sermon of our bleſſed Lord, on the Mount, inſtructs us to carry their Obligation farther, that is, to more Points, than either the Jews, a People of groſs Underſtanding and carnal Diſpoſitions, commonly took into Conſideration; or their Prophets were commiſſioned diſtinctly to repreſent to them; the Wiſdom of God foreſeeing, that it would only increaſe their Guilt: and further indeed, than the Words of the Commandments, if taken ſtrictly, expreſs. But the Reaſon is, that being viſibly intended for a Summray of human Duty, they both may, and muſt, be underſtood, by thoſe who are capable of penetrating into the Depth of their Meaning, to imply more than they expreſs. And therefore, to comprehend their full Extent, it will be requiſite to obſerve the following Rules. Where any Sin is forbidden in them, the oppoſite Duty is implicitly enjoined: and where any Duty is enjoined, the oppoſite Sin is implicitly

[a] Gal. vi. 16.

forbidden.

forbidden. Where the higheſt Degree of any thing evil is prohibited; whatever is faulty in the ſame Kind, though in a lower Degree, is by Conſequence prohibited. And where one Inſtance of virtuous Behaviour is commanded, every other, that hath the ſame Nature, and ſame Reaſon for it, is underſtood to be commanded too. What we are expected to abſtain from, we are expected to avoid, as far as we can, all Temptations to it, and Occaſions of it: and what we are expected to practiſe, we are expected to uſe all fit Means, that may better enable us to practiſe it. All, that we are bound to do ourſelves, we are bound, on fitting Occaſions, to exhort and aſſiſt others to do, when it belongs to them: and all, that we are bound not to do, we are to tempt Nobody elſe to do, but keep them back from it, as much as we have Opportunity. The ten Commandments, excepting two that required Enlargement, are delivered in few Words: which brief Manner of ſpeaking hath great Majeſty in it. But explaining them according to theſe Rules; which are natural and rational in themſelves, favoured by ancient

ancient Jewiſh Writers *, authorized by our bleſſed Saviour, and certainly deſigned by the Makers of the Catechiſm to be uſed in expounding it: we ſhall find, that there is no Part of the moral Law, but may be fitly ranked under them: as will appear by what ſhall be ſaid, in ſpeaking ſeparately on each Commandment.

Before them all, is placed a general Preface: expreſſing, firſt, the Authority of him who gave them; *I am the Lord thy God:* ſecondly, his Goodneſs to thoſe whom he enjoined to obſerve them; *who brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the Houſe of Bondage.* Now the Authority of God over us Chriſtians, is as great, as it could be over the Jews. And his Goodneſs is much greater, in freeing us from the Bondage of Sin, and opening to us the heavenly Land of Promiſe, than it was in leading them, from Egyptian Slavery, to the

* Χρη δε μηδ' εκεινο αγνοειν, ὁτι οἱ ι λογοι κεφαλαια νομωνται, των εν εἰδει παρ' ὁλην την νομοθεσιαν εν ταις ἱεραις βιβλοις αναγραφεντων. Philo de Decal. The ten Commandments are אמות התורה ושרשיה. Cozri, p. 44. See alſo there p. 107.

earthly *Canaan:* though indeed this Deliverance, having made ſo freſh and ſo ſtrong an Impreſſion on them, was the fitteſt to be mentioned at that Time.

The ten Commandments being originally written, by the Finger of God himſelf, on two Tables of Stone; and conſiſting of two Parts, our Duty to our Maker, and to our Fellow-creatures; which we can never perform as we ought, if we neglect that we owe to ourſelves; the four firſt are uſually called Duties of the firſt Table; the ſix laſt, of the ſecond. And our Saviour, in Effect, divides them accordingly, when he reduces them to theſe: *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart; and thy Neighbour, as thyſelf*[f].

The firſt Commandment is, *Thou ſhalt have none other Gods, but me.*

The ſame Reaſons, which prove, that God is, prove that there is but one God. The Imagination of two or more Beings, each perfect and each infinite, is at firſt Sight groundleſs. For one ſuch Being is ſufficient

[f] Matth. xxii. 37, 39.

to produce and govern every Thing elſe: and therefore more than one can never be proved by Reaſon: and yet, if there were more, all Men would ſurely have had ſome Way of knowing it: and till we have, we are not to believe it. Indeed we have ſtrong Reaſons to believe the contrary. For if there is no Difference between theſe ſeveral ſuppoſed Beings, they are but one and the ſame. And if there is any Difference, one muſt be leſs perfect than the other, and therefore imperfect, and therefore not God. Beſides, as the whole Courſe of Nature appears to proceed uniformly under one Direction; there is, without Queſtion, only one Director; not ſeveral, thwarting each other.

And what Reaſon teaches in this Matter, Scripture every where confirms; forbidding us to worſhip, or believe in, any other Deity, than the one Maker and Ruler of Heaven and Earth; who hath manifeſted himſelf to all Men by the Works of his Hands; to the Patriarchs and Jews, by the Revelations, recorded in *Moſes* and the Prophets; and finally to Chriſtians, by his Son our Lord:

who, in a Way and Manner to us inconceivable, is one with the Father; and the Holy Spirit with both: as I have already ſhewn you, in diſcourſing on the Creed.

There being then this one only God; the Commandment before us enjoins,

I. That we have him for our God:

II. That we have no other.

I. That we have him: that is, think ſo of him, and behave ſo to him, as his infinite Perfection, and our abſolute Dependance on him, require: which general Duty towards God, our Catechiſm very juſtly branches out into the following Particulars.

Firſt, that we *believe in him. For he that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is*[z]. The Foundation on which this Belief ſtands, I have ſhewn in its proper Place. And the great Thing, in which it conſiſts, is, that we fix firmly in our Minds, recall frequently to our Memories, and imprint deeply upon our Hearts, an awful Perſuaſion of the Being and Preſence, the Power and Juſtice,

[z] Heb. xi. 6.

the Holineſs and Truth, of this great Lord of all. The Conſequence of this will be,

Secondly, That we *fear him.* For ſuch Attributes as theſe, duly conſidered, muſt fill the moſt innocent Creatures with Reverence and Self-abaſement. But ſinful and guilty ones, as we know ourſelves to have been, have Cauſe to feel yet ſtronger Emotions in their Souls from ſuch a Meditation: Apprehenſions of his Diſpleaſure, and Solliciture for his Pardon; leading us naturally to that penitent Care of our Hearts and Lives, on which he hath graciouſly aſſured us, that through Faith in Chriſt *Jeſus*, we ſhall be forgiven. And then, Gratitude for his Mercy will prompt us to the

Third Duty towards him, which our Catechiſm ſpecifies, that we *love him: the Fear of the Lord* being, as the Son of *Sirach* declares, *the Beginning of his Love*[h]. For whenever we come to reflect ſeriouſly on that Goodneſs, which hath given us all the Comforts that we enjoy; that Pity which

[h] Eccluſ. xxv. 12.

offers Pardon, on moſt equitable Terms, for all the Faults that we have committed; that Grace, which enables us to perform every Duty acceptably; and that infinite Bounty, which rewards our imperfect Performances with eternal Happineſs: we cannot but feel ourſelves bound to love ſuch a Benefactor, *with all our Heart, and with all our Mind, with all our Soul, and all our Strength*; to rejoice in being under his Government; *make our Boaſt of him all the Day long*[i]; and chuſe him for *our Portion for ever*[k]. A Mind, thus affected, would be uneaſy, without paying the Regard ſet down in the

Fourth Place, which is, *to worſhip him*: to acknowledge our Dependance, and pay our Homage to him; both in private, to preſerve and improve a Senſe of Religion in ourſelves; and in public, to ſupport and ſpread it in the World. The firſt Part of Worſhip, mentioned in the Catechiſm, and the firſt in a natural Order of Things, is *giving him Thanks*. God originally made and

[i] Pſal. xliv. 8. [k] Pſal. lxxiii. 25.

fitted

fitted all his Creatures for Happineſs: if any of them have made themſelves miſerable, this doth not leſſen their Obligation of Thankfulneſs to him: but his continuing ſtill good, and abounding in Forgiveneſs and Liberality, increaſes that Obligation unſpeakably. With a grateful Senſe of his paſt Favours is cloſely connected, *putting our Truſt in him* for the Time to come. And juſtly doth the Catechiſm require it to be our *whole Truſt*. For his Power and Goodneſs are infinite: thoſe of every Creature may fail us; and all that they can poſſibly do for us, proceeds ultimately from him. Now a principal Expreſſion of Reliance on God is, petitioning for his Help. For if we *pray in Faith*[l], we ſhall live ſo too. And therefore truſting in him, which might have been made a ſeparate Head, is included in this of Worſhip; and put between the firſt Part of it, *giving Thanks to him*; and the ſecond, *calling upon him:* according to that of the Pſalmiſt; *O Lord, in thee have I truſted: let me never be confounded*[m]. To call upon

[l] James i. 6. v. 15. [m] Pſal. xxxi. 1.

God, is to place ourſelves in his Preſence; and there to beg of him, for ourſelves and each other, with unfeigned Humility and Submiſſion, ſuch Aſſiſtance in our Duty, ſuch Proviſion for our Wants, and ſuch Defence againſt our Enemies, of every Kind, as infinite Wiſdom ſees fit for us all. After this evident Obligation, follows a

Fifth not leſs ſo: *to honour his holy Name and Word:* not preſuming even to ſpeak of the great God in a negligent Way; but preſerving, in every Expreſſion and Action, that Reverence to him, which is due: paying, not a ſuperſtitious, but a decent and reſpectful Regard, to whatever bears any peculiar Relation to him; his Day, his Church, his Miniſters; but eſpecially honouring his holy Word, the Law of our Lives and the Foundation of our Hopes, by a diligent Study and firm Belief of what it teaches; and that univerſal Obedience to what it commands, which our Catechiſm reſerves for the

Sixth and laſt, as it is undoubtedly the greateſt,

greateſt, Thing: *to ſerve him truly all the Days of our Life.* Obedience is the End of Faith and Fear; the Proof of Love; the Foundation of Truſt; the neceſſary Qualification, to make Worſhip and Honour of every Kind, acceptable. This therefore muſt complete the Whole, that we *walk in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameleſs*[n], not thinking any one ſo difficult, as to deſpair of it; or ſo ſmall, as to deſpiſe it; and never be *weary in well-doing: for we ſhall reap in due Seaſon, if we faint not*[o]: and he alone *ſhall be ſaved, that endureth to the End*[p]. But we muſt now proceed to obſerve,

II. That, as this Commandment requires us to acknowledge the one true God; ſo it forbids us to acknowledge any other.

Both before, and long after the Law of *Moſes* was given, the Generality of the World entertained a Belief, that there were many Gods: a great Number of Beings, ſuperior

[n] Luke i. 6. [o] Gal. vi. 9. [p] Matth. xxiv. 13.

to Men, that amongſt them governed the World, and were fit Objects of Devotion. To theſe, as their own Fancy, or the Folly or Fraud of others led them, they aſcribed more or leſs both of Power and Goodneſs; attributed to ſeveral of them the vileſt Actions, that could be; ſuppoſed them to preſide, ſome over one Nation or City, ſome over another; worſhipped a few or a Multitude of them, juſt as they pleaſed; and that with a ſtrange Variety of Ceremonies, abſurd and impious, immoral and barbarous. Amidſt this Crowd of imaginary Deities, the real one was almoſt entirely forgotten: falſe Religion and Irreligion divided the World between them; and Wickedneſs of every Kind was authorized by both. The Cure for theſe dreadful Evils muſt plainly be, reſtoring the old true Notion of one only God, ruling the World himſelf: which therefore was the firſt great Article of the Jewiſh Faith, as it is of ours.

Chriſtians can hardly in Words profeſs a Plurality of Gods: but in Reality they do, if they ſuppoſe the divine Nature common

to

to more than one Being; or think our Saviour, or the Holy Spirit, mere Creatures, and yet pay them divine Honours. But beſides theſe, we apprehend the Church of *Rome* to ſin againſt the preſent Commandment, when they pray to Angels, to the holy Virgin and the Saints, as being able every where to hear them; and having not only temporal Relief, but Grace and Salvation, in their Power to beſtow. Nay, were the Plea, which they ſometimes make, a true one; that they only pray to them to intercede with God; yet it would be an inſufficient one. For there is no Reaſon to believe, that they have any Knowledge of ſuch Prayers: or if they had, as *there is one God*, ſo there is *one Mediator between God and Man*[q]. And we have neither Precept, nor Allowance, nor Example, in the whole Bible, of applying to any other, amongſt all the abſent Inhabitants of the inviſible World.

But there are ſeveral Ways more, of tranſgreſſing this Commandment. If we aſcribe

[q] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Things

Things, which befall us, to Fate, or to Chance, or to Nature; and mean any Thing real by theſe Words, different from that Order, which our Maker's Providence hath appointed; we ſet up in Effect other Gods, beſides him. If we imagine the Influence of Stars, the Power of Spirits, in ſhort any Power whatever, to be independent on him, and capable of doing the leaſt Matter, more than he judges proper to permit that it ſhould; this alſo is having more Gods than one. If we ſet up ourſelves, or others, above him; and obey, or expect any one elſe to obey, Man rather than God; here again is in Practice, though not in Speculation, the ſame Crime. If we love or *truſt in uncertain Riches*, more than *the living God*[r]; this is that *Covetouſneſs, which is Idolatry*[s]. If we purſue unlawful ſenſual Pleaſures, inſtead of delighting in his Precepts; this is making a *God of our* own *Belly*[t]. In a Word, if we allow ourſelves to practiſe any Wickedneſs whatever, we

[r] 1 Tim. vi. 17. [s] Col. iii. 5. [t] Phil. iii. 19.

ſerve,

ſerve, by ſo doing, the falſe *God of this World*[a], inſtead of the true God of Heaven, beſides whom we ought not to have any other: and therefore to whom alone be, as is moſt due, all Honour and Obedience, now and for ever. Amen.

[a] 2 Cor. iv. 4.

LECTURE XIX.

Second Commandment.

WE are now come to the ſecond Commandment: which the Church of *Rome* would perſuade Men is only Part of the firſt. But they plainly relate to different Things. The firſt appoints, that the Object of our Worſhip be only the true God: the next, that we worſhip not him under any viſible Reſemblance or Form. And beſides, if we join theſe two into one, there will be no tenth left; though the Scripture itſelf hath called them ten[a]: to avoid which Abſurdity, the *Romaniſts* have committed another, by dividing the tenth into two. And they might as well have divided it into ſix or ſeven; as I ſhall ſhew you, in diſcourſing upon it. For theſe Reaſons, the

[a] 2 Exod. xxxiv. 28. Deut. iv. 13. x. 4.

oldeſt

oldeſt and moſt conſiderable, both of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Writers, who diſtinguiſh the Commandments by their Number, diſtinguiſh them in the ſame Manner, that we do. Perhaps it may ſeem of ſmall Conſequence, how that before us is counted, provided it be not omitted. And we muſt own, that ſome Perſons before the Riſe of Popery, and ſome Proteſtants ſince the Reformation, have, without any ill Deſign, reckoned it as the Papiſts do. But what both the former have done by mere Miſtake, theſe laſt endeavour to defend out of Policy: well knowing, that when once they have got the ſecond to be conſidered as only a Part of the firſt, they can much more eaſily paſs it over, as a Part of no great ſeparate Meaning or Importance, than if it were thought a diſtinct Precept. And accordingly, in ſome of their ſmall Books of Devotion, they paſs it over, and leave it out intirely [b]. But it deſerves, as I ſhall now ſhew you, another Sort of Regard.

[b] This they do in the Latin Office of the Virgin, and in ſome of their Engliſh devotional Books. Indeed there they omit likewiſe all but the firſt Sentence of our fourth Commandment, and the Promiſe in our fifth: perhaps to palliate their preceding Omiſſion.

The

The Prophet *Iſaiah* very juſtly puts the Queſtion: *To whom will ye liken God? Or what Likeneſs will ye compare unto him*[c]? He is an inviſible Spirit: therefore repreſenting him in a viſible Shape, is repreſenting him to be ſuch as he is not. He is every where preſent: therefore a Figure, confined by its Nature to a particular Place, muſt incline Perſons to a wrong Conception of him. He is the living, wiſe, and powerful Governor of the World: therefore to expreſs him by a dead Lump of Matter muſt be doing him Diſhonour. We are unable indeed, at beſt, to ſpeak or think worthily of him: and we cannot well avoid uſing ſome of the ſame Phraſes, concerning him and his Actions, which we do concerning the Parts and Motions of our own Bodies. But we can very well avoid making viſible Images of him: and the plaineſt Reaſon teaches, that we ought to avoid it; becauſe they lower and debaſe Mens Notions of God; lead the weaker Sort into ſuperſtitious and fooliſh Apprehenſions and Practices; and provoke thoſe of better Abilities, from a Con-

[c] Iſa. xl. 18.

tempt of ſuch childiſh Repreſentations, to diſregard and ridicule the Religion, into which they are adopted.

Therefore, in the early Ages of the World, many of the Heathens themſelves had no Images of the Deity. Particularly, the ancient *Perſians* had none [d]. Nor had the firſt *Romans*; *Numa*, their ſecond King, having, as the Philoſopher *Plutarch*, himſelf a *Roman* Magiſtrate, though a *Greek* by Birth, tells us, *forbidden them to repreſent God in the Form, either of a Man or any other Animal. And accordingly*, he ſaith, *they had neither any painted nor engraved Figure of him for* 170 *Years*; *but Temples, void of any Image of any Shape: thinking it impious to liken a ſuperior Nature to inferior ones; and impoſſible to attain the Notion of God otherwiſe, than by the Underſtanding* [e]. And *Varro*, one of the moſt learned of their own Authors, after acknowledging, that *during more than* 170 *Years they worſhipped the Gods without any viſible Repreſentation*, added, that *had they never had any, their*

[d] Herodot. l. i. §. 131.

[e] Plut. in Num. P. 65. Ed. Par. 1624.

Religion had been the purer: for which Opinion, amongſt other Evidences, he brought that of the Jewiſh People; and ſcrupled not to ſay in Concluſion, that they who firſt ſet up Images of the Gods in the ſeveral Nations, leſſened the Reverence of their Countrymen towards them, and introduced Error concerning them[f]. So much wiſer were theſe Heathen *Romans* in this Point, than the Chriſtian *Romans* are now.

But when ſome of the Eaſtern Kingdoms had fallen into this Corruption; particularly the *Egyptians*, who claimed the Invention as an Honour[g], the great Care of God was to preſerve or free his own People from it. The Words of this Commandment expreſs that Purpoſe very ſtrongly: and very clearly forbid not only making and worſhipping Repreſentations of falſe Gods, but any Repreſentation of God at all. And to ſhew yet more fully, that even thoſe of the true

[f] Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 4. c. 31. *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſenſis* indeed ſaith, l. 2. c. 15. p. 87. that *Romulus* erected Images. But as he mentions them no otherwiſe than incidentally, amongſt the Proviſions made by that Prince for divine Worſhip, his Aſſertion is not ſo much to be regarded, as the two contrary more formal ones. Or we may ſuppoſe, that *Numa* took them down.

[g] Herodot. l. 2. §. 4.

God are prohibited by it, *Moſes*, in *Deuteronomy*, immediately after mentioning the Delivery of the ten Commandments, adds with Reſpect to the ſecond: *Take therefore good Heed unto yourſelves: for ye ſaw no Manner of Similitude, on the Day that the Lord ſpake unto you in Horeb, out of the Midſt of the Fire: leſt ye corrupt yourſelves, and make you the Similitude of any Figure*[h]. And when the Iſraelites made a golden Calf in the Wilderneſs, though evidently their Deſign was to repreſent by it, not a falſe Object of Worſhip, but *the Lord* (in the Original it is *Jehovah*) who brought them out of the Land of Egypt; yet they were charged with it, and puniſhed for it, as a Breach of their Covenant with God: and *Moſes* accordingly broke, on that Occaſion, the two Tables of the Commandments, which were, on their Part, the Conditions of that Covenant[i]. Again, in After-times, when the Kings of *Iſrael* ſet up the ſame Repreſentation of the ſame true God at *Dan* and *Bethel*; the Scripture conſtantly ſpeaks of it, as the leading Sin, from which all the

[h] Deut. iv. 12—15, 16. [i] Exod. xxxii.

reſt

reſt of their Idolatries, and at laſt their utter Deſtruction proceeded. For, from worſhipping the true God by an Image, they ſoon came to worſhip the Images of falſe Gods too; and from thence fell into all Sorts of Superſtition, and all Sorts of Wickedneſs.

Yet the Church of *Rome* will have it, that we may now very lawfully and commendably practiſe what the Jews were forbidden. But obſerve: not only the Jews, but the Heathens alſo, who never were ſubject to the Law of *Moſes*, are condemned in Scripture for this Mode of Worſhip. For St. *Paul*'s Accuſation againſt them is, that *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God; but became vain in their Imaginations; and changed the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image, made like to corruptible Man*[k]. And in another Place he argues with the *Athenians* thus. *Foraſmuch as we are the Offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto Gold or Silver or Stone, graven by Art and Man's Device. And the Times of this Ignorance God winked at: but*

[k] Rom. i. 21, 23.

now commandeth all Men every where to repent [l].

Where then is, or can be, the Allowance of that Image Worſhip in the Bible, for which Multitudes of the Romiſh Communion are as earneſt, as if it was commanded there? Nor is Antiquity more favourable to it, than Scripture. For the primitive Chriſtians abhorred the very Mention of Images: holding even the Trade of making them to be utterly unlawful. And indeed pretending to frame a Likeneſs of God the Father Almighty, *whom no Man ever hath ſeen or can ſee* [m], as ſome of that Church have done, without any Cenſure from the Rulers of it, liberal as they are of Cenſures on other Occaſions, is both a palpable and a heinous Breach of this Commandment. For, though we find in the Old Teſtament, that an Angel hath ſometimes appeared, repreſenting his Perſon, as an Ambaſſador doth that of his Prince; and though, in a Viſion of *the Ancient of Days, his Garment was white as Snow, and the Hair of his Head like pure Wool* [n]; yet theſe Things gave the Jews no Right

[l] Acts xvii. 29, 30. [m] 1 Tim. vi. 16. [n] Dan. vii. 9.

then,

then, and therefore can give us none now, to make other, or even the like, Repreſentations of him, contrary to his expreſs Order.

Our bleſſed Saviour indeed exiſted in a human Form. But we have not the leaſt Knowledge of any one Part or Feature of his Perſon. And therefore all Attempts of exhibiting a Likeneſs of him are utterly vain. Beſides, he hath appointed a very different Memorial of himſelf, the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: and we ought to think that a ſufficient one. Theſe others can ſerve no good Purpoſe, but what, by due Meditation, may be attained as well without them. And there is great and evident Danger of Evil in them, from that unhappy Proneneſs of Mankind to fix their Thoughts and Affections on ſenſible Objects, inſtead of raiſing them higher; which if any one doth not feel in himſelf, he muſt however ſee in others. But particularly in this Caſe, long Experience hath given ſad Proof, that from ſetting up Images of our gracious Redeemer, the holy Virgin, and other Saints, to remind Perſons of them and their Virtues, the

World hath run on to pay ſuch imprudent and extravagant Honours to the Figures themſelves, as by Degrees have ariſen to the groſſeſt Idolatry.

Indeed ſome of the Popiſh Writers tell us, that they do not worſhip their Images. Yet others of them, who have never been condemned for it, ſay quite the contrary, that they do worſhip them; and with the very ſame Degree of Worſhip, which they pay to the Perſons repreſented by them. Nay, their public authorized Books of Prayers and Ceremonies not only appoint the Crucifix to be adored, but in Form declare, that divine Adoration is due to it. And accordingly they petition it, in ſo many Words, expreſsly directed to the very *Wood*, as *their only Hope*, to *increaſe the Joy and Grace of the godly, and blot out the Sins of the wicked*[o].

But let us ſuppoſe them to pay only an inferior Honour to Images, and to worſhip the holy Trinity and the Saints by them. Having no Ground, or Permiſſion to pray at

[o] See Dr. Hickes's Collection of controverſial Diſcourſes, vol. 1. p. 47.

all

all to Saints departed, they certainly have none to uſe Images for enlivening their Prayers. If any Words can forbid the Worſhip of God, his Son and Spirit by Images, this Commandment forbids it. And if any Excuſes or Diſtinctions will acquit the Papiſts of tranſgreſſing it, the ſame will acquit the ancient Jews and Heathens alſo. For if many of the former mean only, that their Adoration ſhould paſs through the Image, as it were, to the Perſon, for whom it was made; ſo did many of the Pagans plead, that their Meaning was juſt the ſame [p]: yet the Scripture accuſes them all of Idolatry. And if great Numbers of the Pagans did abſolutely pray to the Image itſelf; ſo do great Numbers of the Papiſts too: and ſome of their own Writers honeſtly confeſs and lament it.

But further: Had they little or no Regard, as they ſometimes pretend, to the Image; but only to the Perſon repreſented by it:

[p] See a remarkable Proof of this produced in an Epiſtle to Mr. Warburton, concerning the Conformity of Rome, Pagan and Papal: printed for Roberts, 1748, 8vo. p. 21.

why is an Image, of the bleſſed Virgin ſuppoſe, in one Place, ſo much more frequented, than another in a different Place, and the Prayers made before it thought to have ſo much more Efficacy?

Upon the Whole, therefore, they plainly appear to be guilty of that Image Worſhip, which Reaſon and Scripture condemn. Nor do they ſo much as alledge either any Command or expreſs Allowance for it. And yet they have pronounced a Curſe upon all who reject it.

But let us go on, from the Prohibition, to the Reaſons given for it in the Commandment. The firſt is a very general, but very awful one. *For the Lord thy God is a jealous God:* not jealous for himſelf, leſt he ſhould ſuffer for the Follies of his Creatures: that cannot be: but jealous for us, for his Spouſe the Church; leſt our Notions of his Nature and Attributes, and conſequently of the Duties which we owe to him, being depraved, and our Minds darkened with ſuperſtitious Perſuaſions, and Fears, and Hopes, we ſhould depart from the Fidelity which

which we have vowed to him, and fall into thoſe grievous Immoralities, which St. *Paul*, in the Beginning of his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, deſcribes as the Conſequences of Idolatry [q], and which have been its Conſequences in all Times and Places.

The ſecond Reaſon for this Prohibition is more particular: that God will *viſit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation of them that hate him.* For, obſerve, worſhipping him irrationally, or in a Manner which he hath forbidden, he interprets to be hating him: as it muſt proceed, wholly or in Part, from a diſhonourable Opinion of him, and tend to ſpread the like Opinion amongſt others. Now we are not to underſtand by this Threatning, that God will ever, on Account of the Sins of Parents, puniſh Children, in the ſtrict Senſe of the Word, *puniſh*, when they deſerve it not [r]. But in the Courſe of Things, eſtabliſhed by his Providence, it comes to paſs, that the Sins of

[q] Rom. i. 21—32. [r] Againſt this wrong Imagination, Cotta in Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 3. §. 38. inveighs vehemently.

one

one Perſon, or one Generation, lead thoſe, who come after, into the ſame, or other, perhaps greater, Sins; and ſo bring upon them double Sufferings, partly the Fruits of their Predeceſſors Faults, partly of their own. And when ſucceſſive Ages follow one another in Crimes, beſides the natural bad Effects of them, which puniſh them in ſome Meaſure, God may juſtly threaten ſeverer additional Corrections, than he would elſe inflict for their perſonal Tranſgreſſions[s]: both becauſe it may deter Men from propagating Wickedneſs down to their Poſterity; and becauſe if it doth not, inveterate Evils demand a rougher Cure. Accordingly here the Iſraelites are forewarned, that if they fell into Idolatry, they and their Children would fall, by Means of it, into all Sorts of Abominations: and not only, theſe would of Courſe produce many Miſchiefs to both, but God would chaſtiſe the following Generations with heavier Strokes, for not taking Warning, as they ought to have done, by the Miſbehaviour and Suf-

[s] See Sherlock on Providence, p. 382—390.

ferings

ferings of the former. Denouncing this Intention beforehand muſt influence them, if any Thing could: becauſe it muſt give them a Concern, both for themſelves, and their Deſcendants too; for whom, next to themſelves, if not equally, Men are always intereſted. And therefore viſiting Sins upon them to the third and fourth Generation ſeems to be mentioned; becauſe either the Life, or however the Sollicitude, of a Perſon may be ſuppoſed to extend thus far, and ſeldom further.

This Threatning therefore was not only juſt, but wiſe and kind, on the Suppoſition, which in general it was reaſonable to make, that in ſuch Matters Children would imitate their wicked Progenitors. And whenever any did not; either their Innocence would avert the impending Evils; or they would be abundantly rewarded in a future Life for what the Sins of others had brought upon them in the preſent.

But if God hath threatened to puniſh the Breach of this Precept *to the third and fourth Generation*, he hath promiſed to

ſhew

ſhew Mercy unto thouſands, that is, ſo long as the World ſhall endure, to *them that love him and keep his Commandments*. To the Jews he fulfilled this Engagement, as far as they gave him Opportunity, by temporal Bleſſings. And amongſt Chriſtians there is ordinarily a fair Proſpect, that a Nation, or a Family, pious and virtuous through ſucceſſive Ages, will be recompenſed with increaſing Happineſs in every Age: which is a powerful Motive, both for worſhipping God in Purity ourſelves, and educating thoſe, who are placed under our Care, to do ſo too. Yet it muſt be acknowledged, that neither the Rewards foretold, nor the Puniſhments denounced, in this Commandment, are ſo conſtantly diſtributed on Earth under the Goſpel Diſpenſation, as they were under that of the Law. But ſtill our Maker as certainly requires, as ever he did, ſince he *is a Spirit, to be worſhipped in Spirit and in Truth*[t]: and the Inducement to it is abundantly ſufficient, that the *Idolaters*, amongſt other Sinners,

[t] John iv. 24.

ſhall

ſhall have their Part in the Lake, which burneth with Fire and Brimſtone[u]. Not that we are to be forward in applying ſo dreadful a Sentence to the Caſe of thoſe, whether Chriſtians or others, who, in this or any Reſpect, offend through ſuch Ignorance or Miſtake, as, for ought we can tell, is excuſable. May our heavenly *Father forgive them: for they know not what they do*[w]. But we ſhould be very thankful to him for the Light, which he hath cauſed to ſhine upon us; and very careful to *walk* in it *as* becomes the *Children of Light, having no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs*[x].

[u] Rev. xxi. 8. [w] Luke xxiii. 34. [x] Epheſ. v. 8, 11.

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LECTURE XX.

Third Commandment.

THE firſt Commandment having provided that we ſhould worſhip only the one true God; and the ſecond prohibited worſhipping him in a Manner ſo unworthy and dangerous, as by Images; the third proceeds to direct, that we preſerve a due Reverence to him in our whole Converſation and Behaviour. *Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.* Under theſe Words are forbidden ſeveral Things which differ in their Degrees of Guilt.

1. The firſt, and higheſt Offence is, when we ſwear by the Name of God falſely. For Vanity in Scripture frequently means, ſomething, which is not what it

would appear. And hence using God's Name *in vain*, or to Vanity, principally signifies, applying it to confirm a Falsehood. Doing this deliberately, is one of the most shocking Crimes of which we can be guilty. For taking an Oath is declaring solemnly, that we know ourselves to be in the Presence of God, and him to be Witness of what we speak: it is appealing to him, that our Words express the very Truth of our Hearts; and renouncing all Title to his Mercy, if they do not. This it is to swear: and think then what it must be, to swear falsely. In other Sins Men endeavour to forget God: but Perjury is daring and braving the Almighty to his very Face; bidding him take Notice of the Falsehood that we utter, and do his worst.

Now of this dreadful Crime we are guilty, if ever we swear, that we do not know or believe what indeed we do; or that we do know or believe, what indeed we do not: if ever, being upon our Oaths, we mislead those, whom we ought to inform; and give any other, than the exactest and fairest Account that we can, of any Matter, concerning

which we are examined. Again, if we promiſe upon Oath to do a Thing, without firmly deſigning to do it; or if we promiſe not to do a Thing, without firmly deſigning to abſtain from it: this alſo is forſwearing ourſelves. Nay further; provided the Thing, which we promiſe, be lawful, if we do not ever after take all the Care, that can be reaſonably expected, to make our Promiſe good, we are guilty of Perjury; and of living in it, ſo long as we live in that Neglect. If indeed a Perſon hath ſworn to do, what he thought he could have done; and it proves afterwards unexpectedly, that he cannot; ſuch a one is chargeable only with Miſtake, or Inconſiderateneſs at moſt. And if we either promiſe, or threaten, any Thing, which we cannot lawfully do: making ſuch a Promiſe is a Sin; but keeping it would be another, perhaps a greater Sin; and therefore it innocently may, and in Conſcience ought to be broken. But if we have promiſed what we may lawfully, but only cannot conveniently, perform; we are by no Means on that Account releaſed from our Engage-

ment: unleſs either we were unqualified to promiſe, or were deceived into promiſing: or the Perſon to whom we have engaged, voluntarily ſets us at Liberty; or the Circumſtances of the Caſe be plainly and confeſſedly ſuch, that our Promiſe was not originally deſigned to bind us in them.

You ſee then what is Perjury. And you muſt ſee, it is not only the directeſt and groſſeſt Affront to God; for which Reaſon it is forbidden in the firſt Table of the ten Commandments; but the moſt pernicious Injury to our Fellow-creatures; on which Account you will find it again forbidden in the ſecond Table. If Perſons will aſſert falſely upon Oath; no one knows what to believe; no one's Property or Life is ſafe. And if Perſons will promiſe falſely upon Oath: no one can know whom to truſt; all Security of Government and human Society, all mutual Confidence in Trade and Commerce, in every Relation and Condition, is utterly at an End. With the greateſt Reaſon therefore are perjured Wretches abhorred of all the World. And no Intereſt of our own, no Kindneſs or Compaſſion for other

Perſons,

Perſons, no Turn or Purpoſe of whatſoever Sort to be ſerved by it, can ever juſtify our ſwerving at all from Truth, either in giving Evidence, or entering into Engagements. Nor muſt we think in ſuch Caſes to come off with Equivocations, Evaſions, and Quibbles; and imagine it innocent to deceive this Way. On the contrary, the more artful and cunning our Falſehoods are, the more deliberate and miſchievous, and therefore the wickeder, they are. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked* [a]: and the following are the Declarations of his ſacred Word to the upright Man: *Lord, who ſhall dwell in thy Tabernacle, and reſt upon thy holy Hill? He that ſpeaketh the Truth from his Heart, and hath uſed no Deceit with his Tongue: he that ſweareth unto his Neighbour and diſappointeth him not, though it were to his own Hindrance* [b]. But to the perjured: *ſeeing he deſpiſed the Oath, by breaking the Covenant; thus ſaith the Lord God: As I live, ſurely mine Oath that he hath deſpiſed, and my Covenant that he hath broken, I will recompenſe it upon his Head* [c].

[a] Gal. vi. 7. [b] Pſal. xv. 1, 2, 3, 5. [c] Ezek. xvii. 18, 19.

[Let us all ſtand in Awe of ſo dreadful a Threatening, and avoid ſo horrible a Guilt, Particularly at preſent, let all, who have ſworn Allegiance to the King, faithfully *keep it, and that in Regard to the Oath of God* [d]. And let thoſe who have not ſworn, remember however, that merely claiming the Protection of a Government, implies ſome Promiſe of being dutiful to it in Return; and that a ſucceſsful Rebellion would not only tempt Multitudes of our Fellow-ſubjects to Perjury, but lay our Country, its Laws and Religion, at the abſolute Mercy of a Faith-breaking Church [e].]

One Thing more ſhould be added here; for it cannot well be mentioned too often, that next to falſe ſwearing, falſe ſpeaking and lying, whether in what we aſſert, or what we promiſe, is a grievous Sin, and hateful to God and Man. Though we do not call on our Maker to be Witneſs, yet he is a Witneſs of whatever we ſay. And it is preſumptuous Wickedneſs to utter an Untruth in the Preſence of *the God of Truth* [f]. It is

[d] Eccl. viii. 2. [e] This Paragraph was added in the Time of the Rebellion, 1745. [f] Pſal. xxxi. 5.

alſo

alſo at the ſame time very hurtful to other Perſons: and very fooliſh with Reſpect to ourſelves. For they who will lie, to conceal their Faults, or to carry their Ends, are perpetually found out, diſappointed and ſhamed, for the moſt Part, in a very little while: and then, for ever after, they are diſtruſted and diſbelieved, even when they ſpeak Truth: as indeed who can depend upon ſuch, or who would venture to employ them? Many other Faults may be borne, ſo long as Honeſty and Sincerity laſt: but a Failure in theſe cannot be paſſed over: ſo juſt is *Solomon*'s Obſervation; *The Lip of Truth ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever: but a lying Tongue is but for a Moment* [s].

2. Another Way of *taking God*'s *Name in vain* is when we ſwear by it needleſsly, though it be not falſely. For this alſo the Word *in vain* ſignifies.

One Way of doing ſo, is by raſh and inconſiderate Vows: for a Vow, being a Promiſe made ſolemnly to God, partakes of the Nature of an Oath. And there may poſſibly be ſometimes good Reaſons for

[s] Prov. xii. 19.

entering into this Kind of Engagement. But vowing to do what there is no Uſe in doing, is trifling with our Creator; making unlawful Vows, is directly telling him, we will diſobey him: making ſuch without Neceſſity, as are difficult to keep, is leading ourſelves into Temptation; and indeed making any, without much Thought and prudent Advice firſt, uſually proves an unhappy Snare. One Vow we have all made, and were bound to make, that of our Baptiſm, which includes every real good Reſolution. That therefore let us carefully keep, and frequently ratify; and we ſhall ſcarce have Occaſion to make any more.

Another very needleſs, and always ſinful, Uſe of God's Name, is by Oaths in common Diſcourſe. Too many there are, who fill up with them a great Part of their moſt trifling Converſation: eſpecially, if ever ſo little Warmth riſes in Talk, then they abound in them. Now it is unavoidable, but Perſons, who are perpetually ſwearing, muſt frequently perjure themſelves. But were that otherwiſe; it is great Irreverence, upon every ſlight Thing we ſay, to invoke God for a Witneſs;

Witneſs; and mix *his holy and reverend Name*[h] with the idleſt Things, that come out of our Mouths. And what makes this Practice the more inexcuſable is, that we cannot have either any Advantage from it, or any natural Pleaſure in it. Sometimes it ariſes from a Haſtineſs and Impatience of Temper; which is but increaſed by giving this Vent to it: whereas it is every one's Wiſdom, not to let it break out in any Way, much leſs in ſuch a Way. But generally it is nothing more than a ſilly and profane Cuſtom, inconſiderately taken up: and there are the ſtrongeſt Reaſons for laying it down immediately. It will make us diſliked and abhorred by good Perſons, and ſcarce recommend us to the very worſt. No Perſon is the ſooner believed for his frequent ſwearing: on the contrary, a modeſt ſerious Affirmation is always much more regarded. And if any one's Character is ſo low, that his Word cannot be taken; he muſt think of other Methods to retrieve it. For he will not at all mend Matters, by adding his Oath ever ſo often over. Then if Swearing be

[h] Pſal. cxi. 9.

affected,

affected, as becoming; it is certainly quite otherwiſe, in the higheſt Degree. The very Phraſes uſed in it, as well as the Occaſions, on which they are uſed, are almoſt conſtantly abſurd and fooliſh: and ſurely Profaneneſs can never leſſen the Folly. Beſides, they make the Converſation of Men ſhocking and helliſh. They are acknowledged to be diſreſpectful to the Company, in which they are uſed: and if Regard to their earthly Superiors can reſtrain Perſons from ſwearing; why ſhould not the Reverence, owing to our heavenly Father, do it much more effectually? But indeed the Indulgence of this Sin wears off by Degrees all Senſe of Religion, and of every Thing that is good.

Juſtly therefore doth our Saviour direct: *But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all: neither by Heaven, for it is God's Throne; nor by the Earth, for it is his Footſtool; neither by Jeruſalem, for it is the City of the great King: neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy Head, for thou canſt not make one Hair white or black. But let your Communication be, Yea, Yea; Nay,*

Nay, Nay; for whatſoever is more than theſe, cometh of Evil[1]. That is: avoid, not only the groſſer Oaths, but all the ſilly Refinements and Softenings of them, which Men have contrived, in Hope to make them ſeem innocent; for, though the Name of God be not expreſſed, yet if it be implied, by mentioning ſomething related to God, inſtead of himſelf; indeed whatever Form is uſed to diſguiſe it, the Intent is the ſame; and the Effect will be, bringing a ſacred Obligation into Familiarity and Contempt. Keep yourſelves therefore, throughout the Whole of your common Converſation, within the Bounds of a plain Affirmation or Denial: for whatever goes beyond theſe, proceeds from a bad Turn of Mind, and will produce bad Conſequences.

If indeed we be required to ſwear before a Magiſtrate, or public Officer, for the Diſcovery of Truth, and the doing of Juſtice, this is notwithſtanding lawful. For our Saviour forbids it only in *our Communication*, our ordinary Diſcourſe: and he himſelf, our great Pattern, anſwered upon Oath to

[1] Matth. v. 34, 35, 36.

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the high Prieſt, who *adjured him by the living God*[k]. Or though we be not called upon by Law, yet if ſome other weighty and extraordinary Occaſion ſhould oblige us to call our Maker to Witneſs; as St. *Paul* hath done, in more Places than one of his Epiſtles; then alſo we may allowably do it, provided it be always with Sincerity and Reverence. For by Oaths, thus taken, Men are benefited; and the Name of God not profaned, but honoured. But in our daily Talk, and Communication with each other, it is our Saviour's peremptory Precept, *Swear not at all:* a Rule ſo evidently right and important, that even Heathens have ſtrictly enjoined and followed it, to the Shame of too many, who call themſelves Chriſtians.

Together with common ſwearing ſhould be mentioned another Sin, very near akin to it, and almoſt always joined with it, that monſtrous Cuſtom of curſing; in direct Contradiction to all Humanity, and to the expreſs Words of Scripture, *Bleſs, and curſe not*[l]. To wiſh the heavieſt Judgments of

[k] Matth. xxvi. 63. [l] Rom. xii. 14.

God,

God, and even eternal Damnation, to a Perſon, for the ſlighteſt Cauſe, or none at all; to wiſh the ſame to ourſelves, if ſome trifling Thing, that we are ſaying, be not true, which frequently after all is not true; amounts to the moſt deſperate Impiety, if People at all conſider what they ſay. And though they do not, it is even then thoughtleſsly treating God, and his Laws, and the awful Sanctions of them, with Contempt: and blotting out of their Minds all ſerious Regard to Subjects, that will one Day be found moſt ſerious Things. *His Delight was in Curſing*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *and it ſhall happen unto him: he loved not Bleſſing, therefore ſhall it be far from him*[m].

3. Beſides the Offences already mentioned, all indecent and unfit Uſe of God's Name in our Diſcourſe, though it be not in ſwearing or curſing, comes within the Prohibition of this Commandment. All irreverent Sayings, and even Thoughts, concerning his Nature and Attributes, his Actions and his Commands, fall under the ſame Guilt; unleſs we are tormented with ſuch Thoughts,

[m] Pſal. cix. 16.

whether we will or not: for then they are only an Affliction, not a Sin. All Sorts of Talk, ridiculing, misrepresenting, or inveighing against Religion, or whatever is connected with it, incur the like Condemnation. Nay, even Want of Attention in God's Worship, *drawing near to him with our Mouths*, whilst *we remove our Hearts far from him*[n], if it be wilfully or carelessly indulged, makes us chargeable, in its Degree, with the Sin of *taking his Name in vain*.

4. Though we no Way profane his Name ourselves; yet if we intice others to Perjury and Falsehood; or provoke them to rash Oaths and Curses; or give them any needless Temptation to blaspheme God; to speak disrespectfully, or think slightly, of their Maker, or his Laws, natural or revealed: by such Behaviour also we become accessary to the Breach of this Commandment; and rank ourselves with those, whom it expressly declares *God will not hold guiltless*: that is, will not acquit, but severely punish.

[n] Isa. xxix. 13.

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Let us therefore be watchful to preſerve continually ſuch an Awe of the Supreme Being upon our own Minds, and thoſe of all who belong to us, as may on every Occaſion effectually influence us to give him the Glory due unto his Name, both in our more ſolemn Addreſſes to him, and in our daily Words and Actions. For *God is greatly to be feared in the Aſſembly of the Saints; and to be had in Reverence of all them, that are round about him*[o].

[o] Pſal. lxxxix. 7.

LECTURE XXI.

Fourth Commandment.

IF the Worſhip of God were left at large to be performed at any Time, too many would be tempted to defer and poſtpone it, on one Pretence or another, till at Length it would be performed at no Time. And therefore, though he were to be adored only by each Perſon ſeparately, and in private, it would be very expedient to fix on ſome ſtated returning Seaſons for that Purpoſe. But Reaſon ſhews it to be requiſite, and the Experience of all Ages proves it to be natural, that as we are ſocial Creatures, we ſhould be ſocial in Religion, as well as other Things, and honour in common our common Maker: that we ſhould unite in giving Thanks to him

for the Bleſſings of Life; a very great Part of which we ſhould be incapable of, without uniting: that we ſhould join in praying Forgiveneſs of the Sins, which we too often join in committing: petition him together for the Mercies, which we have Need of receiving together; and, by aſſembling to learn and acknowledge our ſeveral Duties, keep alive in one another, as well as ourſelves, that conſtant Regard to Piety and Virtue, on which our Happineſs depends, here and hereafter.

Since therefore, on theſe Accounts, there muſt be public Worſhip and Inſtruction: it is not only expedient, but neceſſary, that there ſhould be alſo fixed Times appointed for it by ſufficient Authority. And how much and what Time ſhould be devoted to this Purpoſe, every Society muſt have determined for themſelves, and would have found it hard enough to agree in determining, if God had given no Intimation of his Will in the Caſe. But happily we are informed, in the Hiſtory of the Creation, that the Maker of the World, having finiſhed his Work in ſix Days, (which he could

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as eaſily have finiſhed in one Moment, had it not been for ſome valuable Reaſon, probably of Inſtruction to us) *bleſſed the ſeventh Day, and ſanctified it*[a]: that is, appointed every Return of it to be religiouſly kept, as a ſolemn Memorial, that *of him, and* therefore *to him, are all Things*[b]. It is much the moſt natural to apprehend, that this Appointment took Place from the Time, when it is mentioned; from the Time, when the Reaſon of it took Place. And it is no Wonder at all, that, in ſo ſhort a Hiſtory, Notice ſhould not be taken of the actual Obſervation of it before *Moſes*: for Notice is not taken of it in 500 Years after *Moſes*. Yet we know of a Certainty, that in his Time, at leaſt, it was ordered to be obſerved, both in this fourth Commandment, and in other Parts of the Law, which direct more particularly the Manner of keeping it.

The Thing, moſt expreſly enjoined the Jews, in each of theſe Paſſages, is, reſting from all Manner of Work; and not ſuffering their Families, their Cattle, nor

[a] Gen. ii. 3. [b] Rom. xi. 36.

even the Strangers that lived amongſt them, to labour on that Day. And the Reaſon of this Reſt, given in the Commandment, as you have it in the Book of *Exodus*, is, that *the Lord reſted on the ſeventh Day* from his Work of Creation. Not that this, or any Thing, could be a Fatigue to him. For *the Creator of the Ends of the Earth fainteth not, neither is weary*[c]. But the Expreſſion means, that having then finiſhed the Formation of the World, he ceaſed from it; and required Men alſo to ceaſe from their Labours every ſeventh Day; in Memory of that fundamental Article of all Religion, that the Heavens and Earth were made, and therefore are governed, by one infinitely wiſe, powerful, and good Being. And thus was the *Sabbath*, which Word means the Day of Reſt, *a Sign*, as the Scripture calls it, *between God and the Children of Iſrael*[d]; a Mark, to diſtinguiſh them from all Worſhippers of falſe Deities.

But beſides this principal Reaſon for the Repoſe of every ſeventh Day, two others

[c] Iſa. xl. 28.

[d] Exod. xxxi. 13. 17. Ezek. xx. 12, 20.

are mentioned in the Law: that it might remind them of that Deliverance from heavy Bondage, which God had granted them; *Remember, that thou waſt a Servant in the Land of Egypt, and that the Lord brought thee out thence; therefore he commanded thee to keep the Sabbath Day*[e]: and likewiſe that their Servants and Cattle might not be worn out with inceſſant Toil; *that thine Ox and thine Aſs may reſt; and the Son of thy Handmaid, and the Stranger, may be refreſhed*[f]. Such Mercy indeed is little more than common Prudence: but there are in the World Multitudes of hard-hearted Wretches, who would pay ſmall Regard to that Conſideration, were they left to their own Liberty.

Now merely abſtaining from common Work on this Day, in Obedience to God's Command, for ſuch religious and moral Ends as theſe, was undoubtedly ſanctifying, or keeping it holy. But then we are not to ſuppoſe, that the Leiſure, thus provided for Men, was to be thrown away juſt as they pleaſed, inſtead of being uſefully employed.

[e] Deut. v. 15. [f] Exod. xxiii. 12.

God directed the Jews: *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Soul and with all thy Might; and the Words, which I command thee this Day, ſhall be in thy Heart; and thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy Children; and ſhalt talk of them, when thou ſitteſt in thine Houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the Way, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up* [g]. Now, as he required them to attend ſo conſtantly to theſe Duties; he could not but expect, they ſhould attend more eſpecially to them on that Day, when the great Foundation of all Duty, his creating the World, was appointed to be commemorated; and when they had Nothing to take off their Thoughts from what they owed to God their Maker. There was a peculiar Sacrifice appointed for that Day: there is a peculiar Pſalm compoſed for it, the Ninety-ſecond: and theſe Things are ſurely further Intimations to us, that it muſt have been a Time, peculiarly intended for the offering up of Prayers and Thankſgivings to Heaven.

Few indeed, or none, of God's Laws were

[g] Deut. vi. 5, 6. 7.

well

well obſerved in the Days of the Old Teſtament. But ſtill, as the Prieſts and Levites were diſperſed through the Jewiſh Nation, that they might teach the People Religion; ſo we read, that in good Times they did teach it accordingly: and when could this be, but on the Sabbath Day? We ſee it was the Cuſtom of religious Perſons, on that Day, to reſort to the Prophets, that were in *Iſrael*; doubtleſs to hear the Word of God from their Mouths [h]. We ſee public Happineſs promiſed on this Condition, that Men ſhould *honour the Sabbath of the Lord, not doing their own Ways, nor finding their own Pleaſure, nor ſpeaking their own Words* [i]. We ſee abſolute Ruin threatened for the Profanation of it [k]. We ſee a Time foretold, when *from one Sabbath to another all Fleſh ſhould come to worſhip before the Lord* [l]. And in Conſequence of this, when their Captivity had taught the Jews a ſtricter Regard to their Duty, *Synagogues*, and Houſes of Prayer, were erected *in every City:* where the Maker of all Things was publicly adored, and his Law *read and preached, every Sabbath Day* [m].

[h] 2 Kings iv. 23. [i] Iſa. lviii. 13, 14. [k] Jer. xvii. 27. [l] Iſa. lxvi. 23. [m] Acts xv. 21.

Such was the State of Things, when our Saviour came into the World: whoſe Religion being intended for all Mankind equally, the Deliverance from Egyptian Bondage, in which the Jews alone were concerned, was mentioned no longer in the divine Laws: but inſtead of the Commemoration of this, was ſubſtituted that of the Redemption of the World, from the Dominion and Puniſhment of Sin; which our bleſſed Redeemer accompliſhed by his Death, and proved himſelf to have accompliſhed by his Reſurrection. Accordingly, the firſt Day of the Week, being the Day of his Reſurrection, was appointed, in thankful Remembrance of it, for the Time of public Worſhip amongſt Chriſtians, and therefore is called by St. *John, the Lord's Day*[a]; though in common Language it be more uſually called Sunday: as it was even before our Saviour's Time, and may be for a better Reaſon ſince, becauſe on it Chriſt, the Sun of Righteouſneſs aroſe. Accordingly ſome of the earlieſt Fathers give it that Name.

And that no one may doubt the Lawfulneſs of this Change, of the Day; it plainly

[a] Rev. i. 10.

ap-

appears, from ſeveral Paſſages of St. *Paul*, that we are not bound to obſerve the Day of the Jewiſh Sabbath: and it ſtill more plainly appears, in the Scripture Hiſtory of the Apoſtles, that they did obſerve, and direct the Obſervation of our preſent Chriſtian Sabbath; as the whole Church hath conſtantly done ſince, from their Times to this, though it doth not appear, that they called it the Sabbath Day for many hundreds of Years. One Day in ſeven being ſtill kept, the Memory of the Creation is as well preſerved, and the Intent of this Commandment as fully anſwered, as before: and that one Day in ſeven being choſen, on which our Saviour roſe again, the Memory of the Redemption wrought by him, and called in Scripture *a new Creation*[p], is, in the propereſt Manner, as well as with the greateſt Reaſon, perpetuated, along with the former.

The Day then being thus fixed, which we ought to keep holy; it remains to conſider, how it ought to be kept. And

1. It muſt be a Day of Reſt, in order to commemorate God's *reſting*, as the Scripture expreſſes it, *from all his Work, which he*

[p] 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. vi. 15.

created

created and made[p]; and to allow that Eaſe and Refreſhment, which, with ſo great Humanity, the Commandment requires ſhould be given, not only to Servants, but to the very Cattle. Beſides, it cannot be a Day of Religion to Mankind, without ſuch Vacation from the ordinary Labours of Life, as may give ſufficient Leiſure to diſtinguiſh it by Exerciſes of Piety. But then, as Chriſtians are not under a Diſpenſation ſo rigorous in outward Obſervances, as that of *Moſes*; they are not bound to ſo ſtrict and ſcrupulous a Reſt, as the Jews were. Though indeed the Jews themſelves became, at laſt, much more ſcrupulous in this Matter, than they needed; and are accordingly reproved by our bleſſed Saviour: from whom we learn this general Rule, that *the Sabbath was made for Man, not Man for the Sabbath*[q]: and therefore all Works of great Neceſſity, or great Goodneſs and Mercy, if they cannot be deferred to another Time, be they ever ſo laborious, may very allowably be done then. Only ſo far as the public Wiſdom of the Laws of the Land hath reſtrained us, we ought certainly to reſtrain

[p] Gen. ii. 3. [q] Mark ii. 27.

our-

ourſelves, even from ſuch Things, as, in our private Opinion, we might otherwiſe think innocent. As to Matters of leſs Labour; what Propriety, and Decency, and reaſonable Convenience require, we ſurely need not omit. And what Practice of the more religious and conſiderate Part of thoſe, amongſt whom we live, allows, hath without Queſtion no ſmall Title to our favourable Opinion. But the Liberties, taken by thoughtleſs or profane Perſons, are not of any Authority in the leaſt. And the ſafeſt general Rule to go by, is to omit whatever may be ſinful, and is needleſs; and neither to require, nor ſuffer, thoſe who belong to us, to do, on this Day, what we apprehend it unlawful to do ourſelves.

2. A reaſonable Part of our Day of holy Reſt, muſt be employed in the public Worſhip of God. This, you have ſeen, the Jews underſtood to be requiſite on their Sabbath: and the earlieſt Account, which we have of ours, informs us, that *on the firſt Day of the Week, the Diſciples came together to break Bread*[r]: which means to celebrate the Lord's Supper. That with this was joined *the*

[r] Acts xx. 7.

Apoſtles Doctrine and Prayer, we learn from another Place of the ſame Book of Scripture[a]. And that every Lord's Day was dedicated to the public Offices of Piety, the Hiſtory of the Church fully ſhews from the Beginning. To ſtrengthen the Obligation of attending on theſe Offices, the Laws of the Land alſo enjoin it. And as all Perſons need Inſtruction in their Duty both to God and Man, and the Generality have ſcarce any other Seaſon for it, than the Leiſure of the Sunday: if this moſt valuable Time be either taken from them, or thrown away by them; they muſt become ignorant and vicious; and of Conſequence miſerable in this World and the next. How wicked then, and how unwiſe, is it, either to throw Contempt on ſuch an Inſtitution, or on frivolous Pretences to neglect improving by it!

3. Beſides aſſembling in the Church on the Lord's Day, every one ſhould employ ſome reaſonable Part of it in the private Exerciſes of Piety: in thinking over their paſt Behaviour, confeſſing their Faults to God, and making prudent Reſolutions againſt them for the future; in praying for the Mer-

[a] Acts ii. 42.

cies

cies, which they more eſpecially want, and returning Thanks for the Bleſſings, with which Providence hath favoured them; in cultivating a Temper of Humanity; in doing Acts of Forgiveneſs, and ſetting apart ſomething according to their Ability, for Acts of Charity; (for which laſt St. *Paul* hath particularly recommended this Time[t]:) and in ſeriouſly conſidering at Home, whatever they have heard in God's Houſe. For our public Religion will ſoon degenerate into an uſeleſs Form, unleſs we preſerve and enliven the Spirit of it, by ſuch Means, as theſe, in private: to which they, above all Perſons, are bound on the Lord's Day, who either have little Leiſure for them on others, or make little Uſe of it.

When once Perſons have brought themſelves to ſpend ſo much of the Sunday as is fitting in this Manner; it will then, and not before, be Time for them to aſk, how the Remainder of it may be ſpent. For it is a very bad Sign, to be careleſs of obſerving what is commanded; and zealous for extending to the utmoſt, what at beſt is only permitted. Over great Strictneſs however

[t] 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

muſt

muſt be avoided. And therefore decent Civility and friendly Converſation may both innocently and uſefully have a Place in the vacant Part of our Lord's Day: of which it is really one valuable Benefit, that it gives even the loweſt Perſons an Opportunity of appearing to each other in the moſt agreeable Light they can, and thus promotes mutual good Will. Nor is it neceſſary at all to baniſh Cheerfulneſs from our Converſation on this Day; which being a Feſtival, though a religious one, we ſhould partake of all God's Bleſſings upon it with joyful Hearts. But then ſuch Inſtances of Freedom and Levity, in Talk and Behaviour, as would ſcarce be proper at any Time, are doubly improper at this; and tend very fatally to undo whatever Good the preceding Part of the Day may have done.

And as to the taking further Liberties, of Diverſions and Amuſements, though they are not in expreſs Words forbidden, for the Deſire of them is not ſuppoſed, in the Word of God; yet by the Laws both of Church and State they are. And what Need is there for them, or what good Uſe of them? If Perſons are ſo vehemently ſet upon theſe Things,

Things, that they are uneaſy to be ſo much as one Day in ſeven without them; it is high Time, that they ſhould bring themſelves to more Moderation, by exerciſing ſome Abſtinence from them. And if they are at all indifferent about them, ſurely they ſhould conſider, what muſt be the Effect of introducing and indulging them: what Offence and Uneaſineſs theſe Things give the more ſerious and valuable Part of the World; what Comfort and Countenance to the unthinking and irreligious Part; what a dangerous Example to the lower Part: what Encouragement they afford to Extravagance, and the mad Love of Pleaſure: what a Snare they place in the Way of all, that think them unlawful; and yet will thus be tempted, to theſe Liberties firſt, and then to others, againſt their Conſciences: and, to add no more, how unhappy they increaſe the Appearance (which, without them, God knows, would be much too great) of Religion being ſlighted and diſregarded; eſpecially by the upper Part of the World, who ſhould be the great Patterns of it.

And if this be the Caſe of merely unſeaſonable Diverſions; imprudent and unlawful

ones

ones are ſtill more blameable on this Day: but moſt of all, that crying Sin of Debauchery and Intemperance, which perverts it from the Service of God to the Service of the Devil; and leads Perſons, more directly than almoſt any Thing elſe, to utter Deſtruction of Body and Soul. Therefore let us be careful, firſt to guard ourſelves againſt theſe Tranſgreſſions, then to keep our Children, Servants, and Dependants from the like, if we make any Conſcience of doing well by them, or would have any Proſpect of Comfort in them. Nor let us think it ſufficient, to reſtrain them from ſpending the Day ill; but, to the beſt of our Power and Underſtanding, encourage and aſſiſt them to ſpend it well. And God grant, we may all employ in ſo right a Manner, the few Sabbaths, and few Days, which we have to come on Earth; that we may *enter*, at the Concluſion of them, *into* that eternal Sabbath, *that Reſt, which remaineth for the People of God*[u], in Heaven.

[u] Heb. iv. 3, 9.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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